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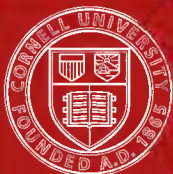
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AFTER THE BALL,

AND OTHER POEMS.

AFTER THE BALL
AND
HER LOVER'S FRIEND
ETC.

BY
NORA PERRY



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1890

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AND 1879,

BY NORA PERRY.

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TO MY MOTHER.

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AFTER THE BALL.

THEY sat and combed their beautiful hair,
Their long bright tresses, one by one,
As they laughed and talked in the chamber there,
After the revel was done.

Idly they talked of waltz and quadrille;
Idly they laughed, like other girls,
Who over the fire, when all is still,
Comb out their braids and curls.

Robes of satin and Brussels lace,
Knots of flowers and ribbons too,

Scattered about in every place,
For the revel is through.

And Maud and Madge in robes of white,
The prettiest nightgowns under the sun,
Stockingless, slipperless, sit in the night,
For the revel is done.

Sit and comb their beautiful hair,
Those wonderful waves of brown and gold,
Till the fire is out in the chamber there,
And the little bare feet are cold.

Then out of the gathering winter chill,
All out of the bitter St. Agnes weather,

While the fire is out and the house is still,
Maud and Madge together, —

Maud and Madge in robes of white,
The prettiest nightgowns under the sun,
Curtained away from the chilly night,
After the revel is done, —

Float along in a splendid dream,
To a golden gittern's tinkling tune,
While a thousand lustres shimmering stream,
In a palace's grand saloon.

Flashing of jewels and flutter of laces,
Tropical odors sweeter than musk,

Men and women with beautiful faces
And eyes of tropical dusk, —

And one face shining out like a star,
One face haunting the dreams of each,
And one voice sweeter than others are,
Breaking into silvery speech, —

Telling, through lips of bearded bloom,
An old, old story over again,
As down the royal bannered room,
To the golden gittern's strain,

Two and two, they dreamily walk,
While an unseen spirit walks beside,

And, all unheard in the lovers' talk,

He claimeth one for a bride.

O Maud and Madge, dream on together.

With never a pang of jealous fear !

For, ere the bitter St. Agnes weather

Shall whiten another year,

Robed for the bridal, and robed for the tomb,

Braided brown hair and golden tress,

There'll be only one of you left for the bloom

Of the bearded lips to press, —

Only one for the bridal pearls,

The robe of satin and Brussels lace,

Only one to blush through her curls
At the sight of a lover's face.

O beautiful Madge, in your bridal white,
For you the revel has just begun ;
But for her who sleeps in your arms to-night
The revel of life is done !

But, robed and crowned with your saintly bliss,
Queen of heaven and bride of the sun,
O beautiful Maud, you 'll never miss
The kisses another hath won !

THE LAST RIDE.

THERE was red wine flowing from the flagons,
The jewel-crusted flagons slim and tall,
And a hundred voices, laughing, jesting,
And a hundred toasts ringing down the hall ;
For the baron held a feast at the castle,
The gay young baron, lithe and tall.

From the dais-steps the red drums beating,
And the horns and the silver trumpets blowing,
And the quick sweet rasping of the fiddles,
Set the dancers in the dance-room a-going ;

And all through the palace ran the music,
And all night the red wine was flowing.

And the baron led the wassail and the dance,
The gay young baron, lithe and tall,
With gallant smiles and jests for the lovely
 women guests,
Till the cock crew athwart the castle wall ;
But amid the lovely faces rising out of ruffs and
 laces,
One face for the baron shone fairer than them all.

He had stolen from the drinking and the dancing,
He was standing in the doorway at her side ;
He was praying, he was pleading and entreat-
 ing,

A suit she coquetted and denied
He was praying, he was pleading and entreating,
When the blast of a bugle far and wide

Rang its clear silver treble in the court-yard,
Three times three, for a sharp battle-call ;
And the voice of a trooper hoarsely shouted,
“ Ho, barons, for the king, one and all ! ”
Round and round, over hill and over valley,
Far and wide rang the sharp battle-call.

Round and round rang the news of the rising,
The rising of old Coventry that night ;
And the barons, one and all, at the bugle's battle-call,

Mustered forth, fifty strong, for the fight.

Corslets ringing, feathers flinging, pennons swinging, —

O, it must have been a spirit-stirring sight !

Women's faces grew as white as the rose, —
The white rose of York upon each breast ;
Red lips in that moment lost their blooming,
Gay hearts in that moment lost their jest.
But out of fifty faces, sorrow-saddened,
There was one face sadder than the rest.

Eyes that a moment since disdained him,
Lips that were laughing and denying,
Heart that coquetted with its wooing,
Now on the wooer's breast is lying ;

While the bugle rings its blast, and the troop-
ers rattle past,
Over hill and over valley flying, flying.

And the baron rides last, but the baron rides fast,
Over hill and over valley, rides away ;
With a smile upon his face, and with a gallant
grace,
As if he rode to tournament, or a hunting holiday.
But in the early dawning, in the gray of the
morning,
In the front of the fight, his white plumes play.

And in the early dawning, in the gray of the
morning,
The red field is won ere the day's half begun ;

And the cavaliers are shouting, at the round-
heads routing,

Till over hill and valley comes creeping up the sun ;
Then the shouts and the cheers turn suddenly
to tears,

For there on the field, his brief race run,

White and still in the dawning of the wild
autumn morning,

White and still, in the chill of the new-risen day,
While the roundheads are flying, the hero lies
dying,

Who so late rode straight in the front of the fray ;
With a smile upon his face, and with a gallant
grace,

As if he rode to tournament or a hunting holiday.

THE ROMANCE OF A ROSE.

It is nearly a hundred years ago
Since the day the Count de Rochambeau —
Our ally against the British crown —
Met Washington in Newport town.

'T was the month of March, and the air was chill,
But, bareheaded, over Aquidneck hill,
Guest and host they took their way,
While on either side in grand display

A gallant army, French and fine,
Was ranged three deep in a glittering line ;

And the French fleet sent a welcome roar
Of a hundred guns from Conanicut shore ;

And the bells rang out from every steeple,
And from street to street the Newport people
Followed and cheered, with a hearty zest,
De Rochambeau and his honored guest

And women out of the windows leant,
And out of the windows smiled and sent
Many a coy admiring glance
To the fine young officers of France.

And the story goes that the belle of the town
Kissed a rose and flung it down

Straight at the feet of De Rochambeau ;
And the gallant Marshal, bending low,

Lifted it up with a Frenchman's grace,
And kissed it back with a glance at the face
Of the daring maiden where she stood,
Blushing out of her silken hood.

That night at the ball, still the story goes,
The Marshal of France wore a faded rose
In his gold-laced coat, but he looked in vain
For the giver's beautiful face again.

Night after night, and day after day,
The Frenchman eagerly sought, they say,

At feast or at church or along the street,
For the girl who flung her rose at his feet.

And she, night after night, day after day,
Was speeding farther and farther away
From the fatal window, the fatal street,
Where her passionate heart had suddenly beat

A throb too much, for the cool control
A Puritan teaches to heart and soul;
A throb too much for the wrathful eyes
Of one who had watched in dismayed surprise

From the street below: and taking the gauge
Of a woman's heart in that moment's rage,

He swore, this old colonial squire,
That before the daylight should expire,

This daughter of his, with her wit and grace,
Her dangerous heart, and her beautiful face,
Should be on her way to a sure retreat,
Where no rose of hers could fall at the feet

Of a curséd Frenchman, high or low :
And so while the Count De Rochambeau,
In his gold-laced coat, wore a faded flower,
And awaited the giver hour by hour,

She was sailing away in the wild March night
On the little deck of the sloop "Delight" ;

Guarded even in the darkness there
By the wrathful eyes of a jealous care.

Three weeks after, a brig bore down
Into the harbor of Newport town,
Towing a wreck, — 't was the sloop "Delight":
Off Hampton rocks, in the very sight

Of the land she sought, she and her crew,
And all on board of her, full in view
Of the storm-bound fishermen over the bay,
Went to their doom on that April day.

When Rochambeau heard the terrible tale,
He muttered a prayer, for a moment grew pale,

Then, "*Mon Dieu !*" he exclaimed, "so my fine
romance,

From beginning to end, is a rose and a glance !"

A rose and a glance, with a kiss thrown in ;
That was all, — but enough for a promise of sin,
Thought the stern old squire, when he took the
gauge

Of a woman's heart in that moment's rage.

So the sad old story comes to a close :

'T is a century since, but the world still goes
On the same base round, still takes the gauge
Of its highest hearts in a moment's rage.

COINCIDENCE.

A PRETTY place it is to see,
Rose-hedged, and fairly held in fee
By larches and the linden-tree.

The roses fall, the daisies droop,
And all about the ancient stoop
The eager sparrows soar and swoop.

We hear the robins chirp and call,
We see the almond-blossoms fall,
The peaches 'neath the garden wall.

But not a human voice is heard
To break the voice of bee or bird,
And not a human hand has stirred

The almond-blossoms, as they fall,
The peaches 'neath the garden wall,
For years around this ancient "Hall."

The hand that latest plucked the rose,
Or broke the blushing almond-blows,
Or stirred the fruit from its repose,

The feet that latest pressed the ground,
The voice that latest echoed round,
Is in what sleep enchanted bound?

Upon a far-off foreign street,
Where only foreign voices greet,
Are wandering the alien feet.

And foreign fruits and foreign flowers
Are plucked within their Southern bowers
By English hands in summer hours.

The voice that once sang prayer and praise
In English chapels, now doth raise,
In Tuscan gardens, Tuscan lays.

But wearily the footsteps fall,
And palace pleasures sadly pall
Upon the alien from the "Hall."

In Tuscan gardens far away
She hears the lark's delightful lay,
She sees the sparrows dart and play.

In Tuscan palaces she hears
A voice from out the distant years,
That floods her heart in sudden tears.

In Tuscan twilights she doth miss,
Amid her royalty, the kiss
That once thrilled all her soul with bliss.

She'll never lose that fond caress,
Although another's lip may press
The cheek, the mouth, the golden tress.

O Love that was so sorely tried,
Yet parted in an hour of pride,—
Where shall the bridegroom find his bride?

Ah ! ne'er on any lover's breast
Will that proud head find utter rest,
Or go she east or go she west.

None knoweth this so well as she
Who wanders there beyond the sea,
Searching in vain the golden key

Which openeth the golden gate,
The portal of a visioned Fate
Where Consolation sits in state.

What consolation doth she seek,
With such a burning, fevered cheek,
And haughty brows that shame the meek?

Within ambition's lofty gains
She strives to dull Love's tender pains;
All other comfort she disdains.

The laurel crown is forming fast,
She feels its royal weight at last,
And thinks the triumph slays the past.

O woman heart, ye'll find again
The burning fire, the tender pain,
For Love will never thus be slain!

The hour approached, — the moment came !

An idle guest pronounced a name, —

And flashed anew the sentient flame ;

Flashed through and through her haughty calm,

And scorched the laurel's potent charm,

Dispelled for aye its transient balm.

“O Love!” she cries, “return to me!

I'd barter all the world for thee!

O, once again to hear, to see,

“To feel that tenderest embrace,

His breath across my happy face,

My head to find the resting-place

“It found in those delightful hours
When Love was crowned with fairer flowers
Than ever bloomed in Tuscan bowers!”

Was Love so mighty? Could it be
Through miles of space across the sea,
This tender cry, this passion-plea,

Was heard by him on English ground,
As one may hear a sudden sound,
And stand in wondering silence bound?

For thus above the rise and fall
Of music in a festive hall,
He heard a wild, impassioned call.

And in a strange bewildering trance
He lost the gay saloon, the dance,
He lost the countess' tender glance,

And stood within a garden shade,
Where larches and the linden made
A well-remembered garden glade.

It was the hour, the very same,
When in her Tuscan home there came
A sudden presence fine as flame.

"My Love," she cries, "he comes for me!
My Love, my Love, he waits for me!"
Then turned her face towards the sea,—

Her face with awe and rapture blent,
And slowly, slowly, downward bent
Her weary head, as if she leant

Against some tender sheltering breast.
So ended all her weary quest,
So entered she upon her rest.

And while from Tuscany there sped
To England's shores the tidings dread,
That she, the laurel-crowned, was dead,

Friends, clustering round an English tomb,
Spoke softly, awe-struck in the gloom,
Of this coincidence of doom.

ARMIDA.

I to be brought at her feet
As a falcon brings a bird ;
I to be troubled or stirred,
Whenever I chance to meet

A face that happens to grow
The lily and rose, on a skin
Satin-textured and thin, —
I to be brought so low !

I to care whether her eyes
Seek another, or shine

As I look, back to mine,
Telling their laughing love-lies !

Or if her hand touches *my* hand,
Ringless, and gloveless, and fair,
As smiling she passes me there,
Where grimly unsmiling I stand !

Last night, in dancing, she grazed
My foot with the hem of her gown,
And there I stood looking down
At the silk as if I were dazed.

And when, with that hand's white wonder,
She lifted the shawl

Which had hindered my fall,
How I inwardly cursed my blunder !

And I cursed *her* under my breath,
As she smiled on me there,
For I knew, false and fair,
She would lead men on to the death

That lurks in a woman's art ;
Worst of all a woman like this,
With her smile like another's kiss,
And her cold unoccupied heart.

All the time I was cursing her there
Her hand was over my arm,

And her face shining calm
Out of its brown chestnut hair ;

Shining serenely and still,
As we paced down the room,
And entered the gloom
Of the garden, led by her will.

Poor fool ! I remember e'en yet
How the heliotrope scent
Wafted up as we went,
And the smell of the crushed mignonette,

As through the dim alleys we strolled
In the night soft and still,

Until suddenly over the hill
Lightning flashed and low thunder rolled.

What madness then clouded my brain ?

For I kissed her fears into rest,

As she clung to my breast

In the tumult of wind and of rain.

'T was the madness of folly and wine ;

For what did I care,

Though I knew she was fair,

When I knew she could never be mine ?

Mine ! though she knelt to me here

With that face for a gift,

Not a hand would I lift
To gather it ever so near.

I shall never be fooled like the rest,
So do not class me with those
Who would kneel for the rose
She wears on her beautiful breast ;

Nor speak to me now of her power :
I tell you 't was wine,
Youth's folly and wine,
That made me her slave in that hour !

NORTH AND SOUTH.

FORT ADAMS.

I. — 1860.

SHE leaped up, laughing, all alone
Upon the rampart's sodden stone,

And, laughing, hid behind the mouth
Of the great cannon, facing south.

“ Ah ! will he find me here ? ” she said,
Then hushed her laugh and shook her head.

“Nay, will he miss me from the rest,
And, missing, care to come in quest?”

But dancing eyes deride the doubt,
The deprecating lips breathe out,

And waiting, waiting all alone,
Upon the rampart's sodden stone,

She looks across the cannon's mouth,
The silent cannon facing south ;

Across the great ships riding down
In stately silence to the town ;

Across the sea just where the mist
Melts all the blue to amethyst,

From whence the wind o'er all the sails
Blew soft that day its southern gales.

But white-sailed ships that rode the sea,
Nor dusky cannon's mouth saw she,

With those young eyes whose wistful gaze
Went dreaming thwart the purple haze ;

Instead, beyond the white-sailed ships,
Beyond the cannon's dusky lips,

Beyond the sea just where the mist
Melts all the blue to amethyst,

The tall palmettoes darkly rise
Before her dream-enchanted eyes,

And waiting, waiting all alone

Upon the rampart's sodden stone,

In dreams she stands beneath the shade

Of Southern palms, — this little maid,

Whose morning face and tender eyes

Took all their hue from Northern skies.

And standing thus enchanted there,

Within her castle of the air,

The rippling tide, that sinks and swells,

Comes to her ear like wedding bells ;

And through her castle's airy halls,

From room to room a low voice calls,

And calling, calling, near, so near,
That half in dream and half in fear

She turns, and swift her vision flies
Before the vision of her eyes;

For some one scales the rampart mound,
And some one laughs: "Ah, truant, found!"

And face to face she meets him there,
Her fairy castle's lordly heir!

So, North and South, the pine and palm,
United, in that summer calm

Of idle summer days they stand,
By prosperous gales and breezes fanned.

II.—1862.

No summer guests with curious gaze
Stroll now beneath the “covered ways,”

And gayly laugh and speculate
Upon the old Fort’s useless state.

Where last year’s lonely arches rang
With idle voices, girls who sang

Their airy songs, or sent their call
From sodden stone or rampart wall,

There echoes now the martial tread
Of soldier sentinels instead.

And they who, sailing through the mist,
Came hither for a lover's tryst,

And vowed next year again to stand
Thus face to face, thus hand to hand,

Upon the old Fort's mouldering mound,—
Where find they now a trysting ground?

Upon Manassas' bloody plain
One keeps a tryst with death and pain ;

And one, grown old before her years
Of youth have fled, with anguished tears

Wrung from despair, far out of reach
Of love's last touch, of love's last speech,

By Narragansett's rushing tide
Walks desolate, — a widowed bride.

MAGDALENA.

I WOULD have killed you if I could,
I would have killed you where you stood,
Magdalena.

I would have killed you if a breath
Freighted with some insensate death,
Magdalena,

Had power to breathe your life away,
To so exhale that rose-hued clay,
Magdalena,

That it had faded from my sight

Like roses in a single night,

Magdalena.

I would have killed you thus, and felt

My will a blessed doom had dealt,

Magdalena.

But who could smite that golden head,

Or mar that young cheek's perfect red,

Magdalena ?

Or pierce that bosom's tender white,

And watch those dark eyes lose their light,

Magdalena ?

Yet would to God that you were lying
Where last year's autumn leaves are dying,
Magdalena !

Ah, would to God ! then I had been
Unconscious of your scarlet sin,
Magdalena !

Then I had never known the stain
Which purples all my life with pain,
Magdalena ;

Which robs me of my beauteous bride,
And leaves me with my stricken pride,
Magdalena.

Ah, when I thought your soul as white
As the white rose you wore that night,
Magdalena!

I wondered how your mother came
To give you that sin-sullied name,
Magdalena.

Did some remorseless, vengeful Fate,
In mockery of your lofty state,
Magdalena,

Because you wore the branded name,
Fling over you its scarlet shame,
Magdalena?

There is no peace for you below

That horrid heritage of woe,

Magdalena.

There is no room for you on earth,

Accurséd from your very birth,

Magdalena.

But where the angels chant and sing,

And where the amaranth-blossoms spring,

Magdalena,

There's room for you who have no room

Where lower angels chant your doom,

Magdalena.

There's room for you, the gate's ajar,
The white hands beckon from afar,

Magdalena.

And nearer yet they stoop, they wait,
They open wide the jasper gate,

Magdalena.

And nearer yet, — the hands stretch out,
A thousand silver trumpets shout,

Magdalena.

They lift you up through floods of light,
I see your garments growing white,

Magdalena.

And whiter still, *too white to touch*
The robes of us who blamed you much,
Magdalena.

AN AUTUMN BOUQUET.

BRILLIANT asters purple and gold,
Milk-white lilies parded and pale,
With their great white petals rolled
Fold on fold like a nun's white veil.

Sprays of geranium, leaf and flower,
Rose-geranium in its bloom :
No strong white lily can overpower
The rose-geranium's faint perfume.

In the centre a flash of flame,
Slender blood-red starry slips,

With their tender tropical name,
Only made for tropical lips.

Then a girdle of brown and gold,
Maple-leaves in their splendid death,
Starred and spotted with golden mould,
And odorous of their dying breath.

This was the gift that into my hand
Dropped at parting yesterday ;
And the giver said, "Will you understand
What I have said in my bouquet?"

O, your asters purple and gold,
I read their mystical meaning well :

They symbol the world with their purple and gold,
The gay, gay world with its glittering spell !

And the lilies of peace are set beside
The royal purples of pomp and power ;
The lilies of peace and the purple of pride ;
Geranium-blooms for love in its flower.

But the fiery human heart burns on,
Like the starry slips with their tropical name ;
The fiery heart burns on and on,
A feverish, flickering flame.

And, girdling all these pleasures and pains,
These pleasures and passions, hopes and fears,
The solemn splendor of Death remains,
To quench Life's laughter and tears.

THE BLACK SHAWL.

SEVEN years ago it was red
As the cactus that shed
On your bosom, last night,
Its warm crimson light.

The prettiest shawl in the world
I thought it was then, with its curled
Silken fringe, and the order
Of its prim narrow border.

Seven years it did duty ;
But its bellehood and beauty

Long since passed away,
As old and *passé*.

.

What hopes and what fears,
What laughter and tears,
It has long ago seen
From its rich scarlet sheen !

Seven years its hue could compare
With the flower that you wear ;
Seven years it bloomed, and then *dyled*
Its soft scarlet pride.

No more like the cactus you wear,
But black as the waves of your hair ;

In place of the colors so fine,
Death's sad, solemn sign.

-

Every thread of its rose-colored youth
Steeped in the black, bitter truth
Which comes to us all
From the grave and the pall.

But stay, — the colors of Death
Are not only for dying breath :
Let them float over life and its pride,
Over hopes that have sickened and died,

Over temples that bleed under flowers
In terrible moments and hours,

When the thorn presses down
Through the fresh laurel crown,

Pressing out, drop by drop,
Without measure or stop,
The red costly wine
From the heart's bleeding vine.

Over homes let them wave,
Where a cold living grave
Buries peace day by day
In its dank poison clay ;

Over doors where the want
Of gold brings a taunt,

And small secret stings —
From a barbed arrow flings;

Over life's simplest state
Such a grim, gloomy fate,
That the heart, dumb with pain,
And too proud to complain,

Is bitterly hurled
Out, out on the world,
With faith lying dead
As a corpse in its bed;

Lying shrouded from sight,
Not in pure vestal white,

But in weeds of despair,
Black, black as your hair.

Yet memory sits
Where the black shadow flits,
And paints o'er anew
The red cactus hue,

Till in bright, bold relief
It stands out from its grief,
From its shroud and its pall,
Like the soft scarlet shawl.

JANE.

SHE came along the little lane,
Where all the bushes dripped with rain,
And robins sung and sung again,

As if with sudden, sheer delight,
For such a world so fresh and bright,
To swing and sing in day and night.

But, coming down the little lane,
She did not heed the robin's strain,
Nor feel the sunshine after rain.

A little face with two brown eyes,
A little form of slender size,
A little head not very wise ;

A little heart to match the head,
A foolish little heart, that bled
At every foolish word was said.

So, coming down the little lane,—
I see her now, my little Jane,—
Her foolish heart with foolish pain

Was aching, aching in her breast,
And all her pretty golden crest
Was drooping as if sore oppress.

And something, too, of anger's trace
Was on the flushed and frowning face,
And in the footsteps' quickened pace.

So swift she stept, so low she leant,
Her pretty head on thought intent,
She scarcely saw the way she went,

Nor saw the long, slim shadow fall
Across the little, low stone-wall,
As some one rose up slim and tall, —

Rose up, and came to meet her there ;
A youth, with something in his air
That, at a glance, revealed his share

In all this foolish girlish pain,
This grief and anger and disdain,
That rent the heart of little Jane.

With hastier steps than hers he came,
And in a moment called her name ;
And in a moment, red as flame

She blushed, and blushed, and in her eyes
A sudden, soft, and shy surprise
Did suddenly and softly rise.

“What, you?” she cried ; “I thought — they said —”

Then stopped, and blushed a deeper red,
And lifted up her drooping head,

Shook back her lovely falling hair,
And arched her neck, and strove to wear
A nonchalant and scornful air.

A moment thus they held apart,
With lovers' love and lovers' art ;
Then swift he caught her to his heart.

What pleasure then was born of pain,
What sunshine after cloud and rain,
As they forgave and kissed again !

'T was April then ; he talked of May,
And planned therein a wedding-day :
She blushed, but scarcely said him nay.

What pleasure now is mixed with pain,
As, looking down the little lane,
A graybeard grown, I see again,

Through twenty Aprils' rain and mist,
The little sweetheart that I kissed,
The little bride my folly missed !

PEPITA.

TENDER eyes and a thrilling voice,—

These were the lures that led me on,
Led me on to love and to trust,
Till all my heart was fairly gone.

Tender eyes and a thrilling voice !

Ah, how tender, ah, how sweet,
Eyes and voice became to me,
In the summer hours we used to meet!—

In the summer hours, in that summer land,
When I tended the vineyards day by day.

“So let me attend you from morn till night,
Pepita, Pepita,” he used to say.

Over the far blue hills he came,
From some northern clime across the sea,
An idle stranger to spy the land,
So I looked at him,—but he looked at me

With a lover's eyes from the very first:
When he spoke to me his words were few,
But his voice swept through my heart like wind,
And the vineyard seemed to blossom anew.

Tender eyes and a thrilling voice:
Day by day and hour by hour

You held me fast in your subtle thrall,
You held me fast in your subtle power!

Tender eyes and a thrilling voice,
The gentlest manner ever was worn,
And under it all a passionate will,
A brooding nature set with scorn.

Tender eyes and a thrilling voice,
Hand of steel in a velvet glove,
Together ye've wounded me full sore,
Under the name and guise of love.

Tender eyes and a thrilling voice:
I think of ye as I knew ye first;

Kind ye meant to be then, I know,—

To give me your best and not your worst.

Kind ye meant to be, kind ye were,

Until God knows what rose in your mind,

What ghost of ill from your shrouded past

Made you cruel, who once were kind.

Tender eyes and a thrilling voice,

I shall never see nor hear ye more ;

And never forget, though I've long forgiven,

The hurt that left me wounded and sore.

THE GARDEN OF THE LILIES.

It is the time of the lilies ;

Look down in the garden there,
At the white bride-blossoms swinging
Bloom-censers into the air ;
At the white bride-blossoms flinging
Their odors into the air.

The sky is a sea of sapphire,

Dappled with purple and gold ;
White heats from the heart of August
Over the land are rolled, —

White heats from the heart of August
Into the lilies fold.

Into the death-white lilies,
Down in the garden there,
The hundred lilies ringing
Bloom-bells in the ardent air, —
The hundred lilies ringing
A requiem of despair.

The days are a swoon of silence,
A drowsy dream of death ;
But at eve a wind comes blowing
A sweet southwestern breath ;
At eve a wind comes blowing
Up from a river of Death.

At the foot of the garden there
It sleeps all day in the sun ;
A river of amethyst veiled with mist,
Till the swoon of the day is done ;
A river of amethyst veiled with mist,
Which the white bride-lilies shun.

From what far mystical islands,
Over what strange sea-floors,
Does the southwest-wind come blowing
Into these lonely shores ?
Does the southwest-wind come blowing
An echo of ghostly oars ?

There's something astir on the grass,
Just under the lilies there,

A glitter of white in the dim midnight,
And a sudden chill in the air ;
A glitter of white in the August night,
And a throbbing thrill in the air.

The lilies shiver and sigh,
The lilies murmur and moan,
With a tender, tremulous thrill,
In their wild Æolian tone ;
A tender, tremulous thrill,
As she stands there all alone.

Did she step from the lilies down,
A splendid spirit of bloom,
With a shimmer of amber tresses flung
Like a meteor into the gloom ?

A shimmer of amber tresses flung
Into the midnight gloom?

Did she step from the lilies down,
This shape of a womanly grace,
With an awful beauty shining clear
Out of her phantom face?
An awful beauty shining clear
From the light of her phantom face?

The murk of the midnight gloom
With a pallid radiance glows,
As she glides like a meteor down to the strand
At the foot of the garden close;
As she glides like a meteor down to the strand—
Where the river of amethyst flows.

A mystical murmur breaks

From the waves that break on the shore,
And a phantom boat drops dreamily down

To the dip of a ghostly oar ;

A phantom boat drops dreamily down,
And never comes back to shore.

She sits at the slender stern,

The queen of a ghostly realm,

While a pennon of amber flutters and floats
Away from the shadowy helm ;

A pennon of amber tresses floats
Away from the dusky helm.

What is it she seeks in the night ?

What ghostly tryst doth she keep

At the foot of the garden there,

While the earth lies shrouded in sleep, —

At the foot of the garden there

What terrible tryst doth she keep?

O, ask of the pale sighing lilies,

What secret of solemn despair

Lies hid in their white bridal bosoms,

And lurks in the chill haunted air, —

Lying hid in their beautiful bosoms,

What secret of solemn despair!

IN AN HOUR.

I.

ANTICIPATION.

"I'LL take the orchard path," she said,

Speaking lowly, smiling slowly :

The brook was dried within its bed,

The hot sun flung a flame of red

Low in the west as forth she sped.

Across the dried brook-course she went,

Singing lowly, smiling slowly ;

She scarcely felt the sun that spent

Its fiery force in swift descent,
She never saw the wheat was bent,

The grasses parched, the blossoms dried;
Singing lowly, smiling slowly,
Her eyes amidst the drouth espied
A summer pleasance far and wide,
With roses and sweet violets pied.

II.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

But homeward coming all the way,
Sighing lowly, pacing slowly,
She knew the bent wheat withering lay,
She saw the blossoms' dry decay,
She missed the little brooklet's play.

A breeze had sprung from out the south,
But, sighing lowly, pacing slowly,
She only felt the burning drouth ;
Her eyes were hot and parched her mouth,
Yet sweet the wind blew from the south.

And when the wind brought welcome rain,
Still sighing lowly, pacing slowly,
She never saw the lifting grain,
But only — a lone orchard lane,
Where she had waited all in vain.

UPHARSIN.

SCENA. — In a Vienna palace when the news is brought of the fall of Sebastopol.

OVER the city a shadowy cloud
Floated and floated ; a gloomy gray shroud,
Floating from cannon-shot, gun-shot, and shell,
Thicker and thicker the dense shadow fell.

Into the palace it stealthily comes,
With the sound of the trumpet, the rolling of
drums,
And the glittering guests in the glittering dance
Hear with it the sound of the shivering lance ;

But never the cries of the wounded and dying,
Who drop in the trenches, or fall in their flying ;
For the Redan, the Redan, is taken at last,
And Sebastopol falters before the death-blast.

Yet gay in the palace their glasses are clinking,
And merry lips laugh o'er the wine they are
drinking.

But there 's blood, crimson blood, in the rose-
rippled tide,

And the lips that are laughing are laughing to
hide

,

The quiver and shiver of hearts that await
But the sound of *their* trumpet to challenge the
fate

Which lies in the splendor of Austria's palace,
Like death in the depths of a rose-crested chalice.

O Tyranny, pause in your soft, silken bower,
And list to the wild, throbbing hearts in this hour!
They're athirst, all athirst, and 't is blood that
 they quaff,
Your blood which they drink with that merry,
 low laugh!

And it drips from their lips to the white marble
 floor,
And the rich silver service seems dabbled* with
 gore ;
But you hear not, you see not: the laugh and the
 jest
Drown the curse of the gallant Hungarian guest.

But the sound of the trumpet, the rolling of drums,
Through the laugh and the jest to Hungary comes ;
While " The Kaiser, the Kaiser is taken at last,
And Austria yields before the death-blast ! "

Is the cry that they hear coming nearer and
nearer,
As the sound of the trumpet comes clearer and
clearer,
With the ringing of Victory's sweet marriage-bell,
Through the booming of cannon-shot, gun-shot,
and shell.

YESTERNIGHT.

THE memories of yesternight,
When in that swift, bewildering dance,
The pressure of your hand, your glance,
All thrill me with a new delight.

The music wrapped us round and round,
While thus within the waltz we whirled,
Regardless of the crowd, the world ;
The music wrapped us round and round.

And, listening to the quickened beat
Of hearts that beat a wilder tune

Than horn and harp and gay bassoon,
We floated on with tireless feet.

A thousand odors filled the air,—
Swept o'er us as we swept along,
Through all the mazy moving throng;
A thousand odors, wondrous rare,

Swept o'er us from a thousand flowers,
At every breathing of the breeze,
From lime and pomegranate trees,
And orange in the orange bowers.

From lilies with their creamy flush,
All splendors of the splendid rose,

Musk, moss, and cinnamon, in blows
And buds of crimson, white, and blush.

But more delicious than the scent
Of Orient shrub or orange-bloom,
The warm and subtly sweet perfume
Which in your breathing came and went ;

Your breath, so soft and balmy sweet,
That touched my cheek, that stirred my hair,
That wandered o'er and o'er me there,
As faster fell our flying feet.

As faster, faster on, until
Beyond the long and gay saloon

We stood alone, beneath the moon,
In garden alleys, dusk and still.

The lights are out, and coldly through
The deepening dawn the day begins ;
But still I hear the violins,
And still in dreams I waltz with you.

AN ACQUAINTANCE.

I REMEMBER when first we met ;

I think I shall never forget

The drawing-room in its curtained gloom,

The amber-curtained drawing-room,

Which set you round like a frame of gold,

As out of the December cold

You hurried in, with your bright blond skin,

A splendid color from cheek to chin.

And, sitting down by my cousin Jane,

You sipped the foam from the pink champagne,

While over the wine the shimmer and shine
Of your strange eyes kept haunting mine.

You talked to her, but you looked at me ;
Such a curious gaze, — what did you see,
What did you trace within my face,
As you drank and talked with that smiling grace ?

Always that nonchalant smiling grace,
Always a mask drawn over the face,
Always a look as if within
You guarded a secret sorrow or sin.

HER SECRET.

WHAT if I think of you once in a while,
With a little blush and a little smile;
With a little blush that comes and goes
As the sweet, sweet wind of memory blows?

What if I picture now with care
A tête-à-tête and an easy-chair?
What if I make the picture clear,
By lighting it up with a chandelier?

Can you see by the softly shimmering flame, —
Can you see to read the musical name

Of him who sits in graceful state

On the little damask tête-à-tête?

Can you see me sitting before him there,

Sitting within the easy-chair?

Can you hear the laugh, can you hear the jest,

The musical laugh of my handsome guest?

Is it unwise to paint the view

In colors so warm, — and light it too?

Will somebody claim the graceful state

On the little damask tête-à-tête?

How many may lose by claiming that!

For many a handsome guest has sat

Beneath the shimmering chandelier,
While the easy-chair was standing near.

How many may lose, how many may win !
Ah, vanity is a costly sin !
For the one I mean will never suppose
That for him the wind of memory blows.

Then what if I think of you once in a while,
With a little blush and a little smile ;
With a little blush that comes and goes
As the sweet, sweet wind of memory blows !

JENNY.

LITTLE Jenny, pretty Jenny,
Jenny with the perfect eyes,
Jenny with the soft silk hair,
And the red mouth puckered wise.

Little Jenny, pretty Jenny,
Jenny with her charming ways,
Jenny with her wooing smiles,
And her broken R's and A's.

Little Jenny, pretty Jenny,
Jenny with that perfect form,

Jenny with that mingled temper,
Half of sunshine, half of storm.

Little Jenny, pretty Jenny,
Laughing as you strive to catch her,
When you chase her round the room,—
Ah! what baby e'er can match her?

Little Jenny, Carrie's Jenny;
There was never such another
As this baby, save, it may be,
Listen, Carrie, — Jenny's mother.

Little Jenny, matchless Jenny,
Sunshine kiss her, winds caress her,
Dark-browed sorrow, do not touch her,
Or, if touching, touch to bless her.

TWO VIEWS.

“THE world is old, the world is cold,”

She very coldly said,

“And all we prize beyond us lies

Till we lie with the dead.

“The world is old, the world is cold ;

A thousand lives can prove

How failures cast us all at last

Into the worldly groove.”

A thousand lives are not my life,

Nor are they types of mine ;

Instead of cold, the world is gold,
And dazzles with its shine.

She shook her head, she broke her thread,
And paused to count the stitches ;
And still she told, the world was cold,
And colder all its riches.

And still I hold the world is gold,
And golden all its glory ;
And still she sings of "fleeting things,"
That dismal, dreary story.

The daisies blow, the roses grow,
In garden, field, and wood,

And care is fleet, where youth is sweet,
And God is very good.

I still must weave, and still believe
My dreams will all come true ;
For hope is bright, and sorrow light,
Where life is fresh and new.

HAUNTED.

You ask me why my thoughts assume
Such dark significance of gloom,
When, sitting in the chapel there,
I list the sermon and the prayer.

If you could summon up such hosts
Of phantom figures, dreary ghosts,
That come and take their seat beside
My seat, or in the stillness glide

Along the purple-tinted aisle,
And whisper of the past, the while

The preacher prays his solemn prayer,
You would not wonder at me there.

If you could hear the tones, my friend,
That with the singers' voices blend,
Or when the organ thunders roll,—
You would not question thus my soul.

You would not wonder that I turn
From church and chapel with so stern
A sadness on my outward face,
And thus refuse your gentle grace.

HESTER BROWNE.

O, you are charming, Hester Browne,

So do not, every time you pass

The little Psyche looking-glass,

Find some disorder in your gown !

In every ringlet of your hair,

In every dimple of your cheek,

Whene'er you smile or smiling speak,

There lurks a cruel, charming snare.

There's not a motion of the hand

That shows a grace to lure and win,

There's not a coy, coquettish sin,
That Hester does not understand.

What use to preach of "better things,"
And tell her she is false as gay?
Be still, and let her have her day,
And count her lovers on her rings.

And let her break a hundred hearts,
And mend them with a glance again;
Be sure the pleasure heals the pain
Of little Hester's cruel arts.

DESTINY.

JUST a door between us,—no more,
And your hand on the bell,
When a voice inside of the door
Broke the spell.

And you turned, perhaps with a sigh,
From the small garden gate,
And I never knew you were by
Till too late.

So near, so near, yet so far!
Just a thin narrow door
Shut between us,—just a bar
Evermore!

And now, perhaps with a sigh,

Or a smile,—who can tell?—

I think what we missed, you and I,

For that bell.

God knew best, though when your last letter

Told the story to me,

For a time, I thought I knew better,

For you see

I wanted what there was denied,

Were it a weed or a flower;

I wanted what budded and died

In that hour.

And though I look back on that season

Of friendship platonic,

And laugh at the rhyme without reason,

Half ironic;

And though time has brought me far more
Than I care now to tell,
I sometimes think of that door
And that bell!

LOSS AND GAIN.

WHEN the baby died, we said,
With a sudden, secret dread,
“Death, be merciful, and pass ;
Leave the other.” But, alas,

While we watched he waited there,
One foot on the golden stair,
One hand beckoning at the gate,
Till the home was desolate.

Friends say, it is better so,
Clothed in innocence to go ;

Say, to ease your parting pain,
That your loss is but their gain.

Ah, the parents think of this,
But remember more the kiss
From the little rose-red lips!
And the print of finger-tips

Left upon a broken toy
Will remind them how the boy
And his sister charmed the days
With their pretty winsome ways.

Only time can give relief
To the weary, lonesome grief;
God's sweet minister of pain
Then shall sing of loss and gain.

HOMELESS.

O, THE wild, wild trouble in your eye,

Marghrita !

The sad, sad trouble that doth lie

Beyond the reaching

Of all preaching,

Marghrita.

Of the dark, dark days you spend,

Marghrita, —

The dreary, lonesome days that rend

You with their woe,

What do they know,

Marghrita,

Who stand amid the flowers of life,

Marghrita,

And have no knowledge of the strife

Which leaves its trace

Upon your face,

Marghrita?

No matter if the winds blow east or west,

Marghrita;

They have pleasant homes wherein to rest,

While you have none

Under the sun,

Marghrita.

LA SIRÈNE.

OVER the flagon filled to the brim
She sends a bewildering glance to him.

Over the sea of pink foaming wine
He reels in the light of her beauty divine.

Deeper and deeper she dreamily dips,
In the rose-tinted wine, her rose-tinted lips.

While over the glass she airily laughs
A pledge which he eagerly catches and quaffs.

And he drinks in a madness wilder than wine,
Through her smile and her eyes' bewildering shine.

He drinks in delirium, danger, and death,
As over the crystal comes floating her breath ;

As over the flagon of rose-colored bliss
She wickedly, witchingly wafts him a kiss ;

Then, laughing a laugh derisive and sweet,
She is gone while he kneels in despair at her feet.

TYING HER BONNET UNDER HER CHIN.

TYING her bonnet under her chin,
She tied her raven ringlets in ;
But not alone in the silken snare
Did she catch her lovely floating hair,
For, tying her bonnet under her chin,
She tied a young man's heart within.

They were strolling together up the hill,
Where the wind comes blowing merry and chill ;
And it blew the curls, a frolicsome race,
All over the happy peach-colored face,

Till, scolding and laughing, she tied them in,
Under her beautiful dimpled chin.

And it blew a color, bright as the bloom
Of the pinkest fuschia's tossing plume,
All over the cheeks of the prettiest girl
That ever imprisoned a romping curl,
Or, tying her bonnet under her chin,
Tied a young man's heart within.

Steeper and steeper grew the hill ;
Madder, merrier, chillier still
The western wind blew down, and played
The wildest tricks with the little maid,
As, tying her bonnet under her chin,
She tied a young man's heart within.

O western wind, do you think it was fair,
 To play such tricks with her floating hair?
 To gladly, gleefully do your best
 To blow her against the young man's breast,
 Where he as gladly folded her in,
 And kissed her mouth and her dimpled chin?

Ah! Ellery Vane, you little thought,
 An hour ago, when you besought
 This country lass to walk with you,
 After the sun had dried the dew,
 What perilous danger you'd be in,
 As she tied her bonnet under her chin!

THAT WALTZ OF VON WEBER'S.

GAYLY and gayly rang the gay music,
The blithe, merry music of harp and of horn,
The mad, merry music, that set us a-dancing
Till over the midnight came stealing the morn.

Down the great hall went waving the banners,
Waving and waving their red, white, and blue,
As the sweet summer wind came blowing and
 blowing
From the city's great gardens asleep in the
 dew.

Under the flags, as they floated and floated,
 Under the arches and arches of flowers,
 We two and we two floated and floated
 Into the mystical midnight hours.

And just as the dawn came stealing and stealing,
 The last of those wild Weber waltzes began ;
 I can hear the soft notes now appealing and
 pleading,
 And I catch the faint scent of the sandal-wood
 fan

That lay in your hand, your hand on my shoulder,
 As down the great hall, away and away,
 All under the flags and under the arches,
 We danced and we danced till the dawn of the
 day.

But why should I dream o'er this dreary old
 ledger,

In this counting-room down in this dingy old street,
Of that night or that morning, just there at the
 dawning,

When our hearts beat in time to our fast-flying
 feet ?

What is it that brings me that scene of enchant-
 ment,

So fragrant and fresh from out the dead years,
That just for a moment I 'd swear that the music
Of Weber's wild waltzes was still in my ears ?

What is it, indeed, in this dusty old alley,
That brings me that night or that morning in June ?

What is it, indeed? — I laugh to confess it, —
A hand-organ grinding a creaking old tune!

But somewhere or other I caught in the measure
That waltz of Von Weber's, and back it all came,
That night or that morning, just there at the
dawning,
When I danced the last dance with my first and
last flame.

My first and my last! but who would believe me
If, down in this dusty old alley to-day,
'Twixt the talk about cotton, the markets, and
money,
I should suddenly turn in some moment and say

That one memory only had left me a lonely
And gray-bearded bachelor, dreaming of Junes,
Where the nights and the mornings, from the
 dusk to the dawns,
Seemed set to the music of Weber's wild tunes?

HALF AN HOUR.

I MET her last year, in the studio

Of Weymer, in the Rue de Charente ;

She came in with cheeks all aglow

From the wild autumn winds, and bent

To my greetings with a flow

Of light murmured words, silver sweet,

Delicate, flattering phrases,

Which my own words sprang forth to meet,

As if I believed in her praises,

Dropped with a smile at my feet.

Courtesy, high-handed, and bred

In the translucent blood of her veins :

Such a lady ! who can flatter, instead

Of your flattering her for your pains,

Without a change of her cool white and red.

Saying, " I 've heard of you much " —

Smiling — " and glad thus to meet " ;

While her hand's tender touch

Brushed my own, to complete

The chaste charm : call it such,

For I knew that it meant nothing more

Than the gracious refinement of art ;

The exquisite odorous core

Of a flower, not its heart.

What wanted I more ?

The flower itself for my share ?

Well, I have it here in my palm, —
A rose that fell from her hair
Into my hand, like a charm,
Just as we parted there.

And half smiling I took it away, —

Half smiling, but was I in jest?
Well, what next ? shall I say

I have worn it here on my breast
Since that red autumn day ?

Only the swift short half

Of a long-drawn hour,
An arch phrase or two, and a laugh :

What *is* the power ? —
Did she give me wine to quaff ?

For, ever I'm seeing a face,
Like a face in a delicate dream.
Larkspur eyes and rose lips through the lace
Of a veil glide and gleam,
Till I half lose the trace.

Then a turn of the head shows such hair!
Black hair like wet silk,
Breaking loose from a silken snare,
And a hand white as milk
Thrusting it back without care.

More than a year, you know,
And much has happened since then;
The world's ebb-tide and flow,
And a man's life with men;
But I'd let it all go

For the swift short half

Of a long-drawn hour,

An arch phrase or two, and a laugh,

And the possible power

To sit there and quaff

That fine fairy wine,

Which has kept its sweet spell,

Kept its sparkle and shine,

Down a year's surge and swell,

From that half-hour of mine.

Of mine ! yes, of mine, sweet !

You've met millions of men,

And dropped a smile at their feet ;

But that half-hour was mine then,

And in it I claim you, sweet.

And in it I have you and hold you,

Larkspur eyes and blush roses !

And in it I clasp you and fold you,

Where this rose reposes.

There, my passion I've told you !

POLLY.

WHO 's this coming down the stairs,
Putting on such lofty airs ;
With that hump upon her back,
And her little heels click, clack ?
Such a funny little girl,
With a funny great long curl
Hanging from a mound of hair ;
And a hat way back in the air,
Just to show a little border
Of yellow curls, all out of order.
She 's a silly girl, I guess,
I 'm glad it is n't — Why, bless

My soul ! it 's our little Polly
Tricked out in all that folly !
Well, I declare, I never
Was so beat ; for if ever
There was a sensible girl,
I thought 't was little Polly Earl.
And here — Well, it 's very queer
To come back, after a year,
And find my Polly changed like this,—
A hunched-up, bunched-up, furbelowed miss,
With a steeple of a hat,
And her hair like a mat,
It 's so frightfully frowzled
And roughed up and tousled !
O Polly, Polly ! — Well, my dear,
So you 're glad grandfather 's here ?

And I confess that kiss
Does *smack* of the Polly I miss, —
The girl with the soft, smooth hair,
Instead of this kinked-up snare.
What ! you 're just the same Polly,
In spite of all this folly ?
And what is that you say
About your grandmother's day,
That you guess the folly
Has n't just begun ? — O Polly,
If you could only have seen
Your grandmother at eighteen !
What 's that about the puffs
And the stiffened-up ruffs
That they wore in the time
Of your grandmother's prime ?

And the big buckram sleeves
That stood out like the leaves
Of the old-fashioned tables ;
And the bonnets big as gables,
And the laced-up waists — Why, sho,
Polly, how your tongue does go !
Little girls should be seen, not heard
Quite so much, Polly, on my word.
O, I 'm trying to get away,
Eh, from your grandmother's day,
But I 'm not to escape
Quite so easy from a scrape?
What, you expect me to say
That your grandmother's day
Was as foolish as this ? —
Polly, give me a kiss ;

I 'm beaten, I see —
And I 'll agree, I 'll agree
That young folks find
All things to their mind ;
And in your grandmother's time,
When I too was in my prime,
I 've no doubt, Polly,
I looked at all the folly
Connected with the lasses
Through rose-colored glasses,
As the youths of to-day
Look at you, Polly, eh ?
But I 've given you fair warning
How older folk see ; so, Polly, good morning !

BESS AND BEN.

SUNNY days, and sunny days,
And all day long,
Here they go, and there they go,
In and out the throng.

Here they go, and there they go,
Up and down the street ;
Benjie grinding out the tune,
Bessie singing sweet.

Singing loud, and singing low,
Trilling out the tune,

Not as Benjie grinds it out,
But as birds in June

Lift and lift their voices up
Out of pure delight ;
Singing loud, and singing low,
Morning, noon, and night.

What ! you never heard our Bess ?
Never heard her sing
“ John Brown’s soul is marching on,”
And “ The Lord is King ” ?

Why, where ’ve you lived, I wonder,
Never to have heard

Bessie, with her tambourine,
Singing like a bird?

Singing up and down the street,
Singing high and low,
Since a little child of three,
Twice three years ago.

It is twice three years, and more,
Since that summer day
When the news from Gettysburg
Told how Sergeant May,

Through the thickest of the fight,
Through the rush and roar

Of the shout and shot and shell,

Held the flag he bore

Firmly, till the very last,

When they found him lying

By the famous old stone-wall,

In the twilight, — dying.

Dying, faltering at the last,

“Little Bess and Ben!

They’ll miss their father sorely:

Who’ll look out for them when —”

And that was all, — the words broke off

In this world, for the other,

And little Bess and Ben were left
With neither father, mother.

And this is why that through the street,
In and out the throng,
Sunny days and sunny days,
And all day long,

Here they go, and there they go,
Up and down the street;
Benjie grinding out the tune,
Bessie singing sweet.

BLANCHE'S CHÂTEAUX.

BUILDING castles in the air,
Spanish castles, fine and fair,
Blanche is dreaming in her chair ;
Keep on dreaming, Blanche.

Poverty is on the wall,
And its shadows downward fall
Drearly upon them all,
But the dreaming Blanche.

While they mourn their scanty fare,
And their daily toil and care,

She is ever dreaming there ;
Keep on dreaming, Blanche.

While they chide thee in disdain,
For thy heedlessness of pain,
Thou art having all the gain,
In thy dreaming, Blanche.

While they only see their cot,
Bounded by its narrow lot,
Scant domains are heeded not
By the dreaming Blanche.

She is wandering far away, —
Building castles grand and gay, —

Growing grander every day ;

Keep on dreaming, Blanche.

Stately mansions, — there they stand,

In Atlantis fairy-land,

By delicious breezes fanned ;

Keep on dreaming, Blanche.

Ocean surges rise and fall

'Neath the turrets slim and tall,

'Gainst a battlemented wall,

In thy dreaming, Blanche.

Where the summer shadows hide,

On the sunny southern side,

There a garden stretches wide, —
There is dreaming Blanche.

Friends of rare and costly mien,
Such as we have never seen,
In that Paradise serene,
Walk with dreaming Blanche.

Blanche is queen in these domains;
Blanche o'er all this beauty reigns,
And a queenly state sustains;
Keep thy dreaming, Blanche.

Though they tell thee how unreal
Are these visions, and ideal,

I will tell thee they are real,
 And to keep on dreaming.

I will tell thee, for I know
 How their splendors come and go,
 That the truest life we know
 Is in dreaming, Blanche.

In our fair Atlantis land
 We have riches at command,
 Which they cannot understand:
 Let us dream forever.

APPLE-BLOSSOMS.

HITHER and thither they swung, Madeline Hays,—
The bloom-loaded apple-tree boughs,
The rose-scented apple-tree boughs,
The pink-tinted apple-tree boughs,—
In the merry May days.

Hither and thither they swung, Madeline Hays;
The blossoms and you together,
Rose-tinted, and light as a feather,
All in the merry May weather,
My rose-tinted Madeline Hays.

Down in the wet, green grass, Madeline Hays,
Where the brown bees cluster and hover ;
Down in the cowslips and clover,
With the apple-tree blooms sprinkled over,
I awaited you, Madeline Hays.

Down in the wet, green grass, Madeline Hays,
Ankle-deep, I pleaded and flattered,
While the blackbird whistled and chattered,
And the pink blossoms pelted and pattered,
All in the merry May days.

“Come down, come down to me, Madeline Hays!”
I pleaded, and pleaded in vain ;
While the pink, pelting rain
And your laugh of disdain
Only answered me, Madeline Hays.

“Come down, come down to me, Madeline Hays!”

I pleaded, and flattered once more ;

And you laughed in my face as before,

Till the wind blew down with a roar!—

What happened then, Madeline Hays?

The wind blew down with a roar, Madeline Hays,

Breaking branches and boughs in the race,

Blowing blossoms and buds in my face ;

What else did I catch and embrace

As the bough broke, Madeline Hays?

Soft, yellow silk hair, Madeline Hays,

Unrolling its lovely Greek twist,

Blowing out its goldening mist,—

It was this that I caught first and kissed,

My bloom-blushing Madeline Hays!

Then through hair all a-dazzle, Madeline Hays,
Eyes and mouth, cheek and chin too,
Out of the dazzle came glimmering through ;
All the love colors, — red, white, and blue, —
What could a man do, Madeline Hays ?

IN JUNE.

So sweet, so sweet the roses in their blowing,
 So sweet the daffodils, so fair to see ;
So blithe and gay the humming-bird a-going
 From flower to flower, a-hunting with the bee.

So sweet, so sweet the calling of the thrushes,
 The calling, cooing, wooing, everywhere ;
So sweet the water's song through reeds and rushes,
 The plover's piping note, now here, now there.

So sweet, so sweet from off the fields of clover,
 The west-wind blowing, blowing up the hill ;

So sweet, so sweet with news of some one's lover,
Fleet footsteps, ringing nearer, nearer still.

So near, so near, now listen, listen, thrushes ;
Now plover, blackbird, cease, and let me hear ;
And, water, hush your song through reeds and
rushes,
That I may know whose lover cometh near.

So loud, so loud the thrushes kept their calling,
Plover or blackbird never heeding me ;
So loud the mill-stream too kept fretting, falling,
O'er bar and bank, in brawling, boisterous glee.

So loud, so loud ; yet blackbird, thrush, nor plover,
Nor noisy mill-stream, in its fret and fall,

Could drown the voice, the low voice of my lover,
My lover calling through the thrushes' call.

"Come down, come down!" he called, and straight
the thrushes

From mate to mate sang all at once, "Come
down!"

And while the water laughed through reeds and
rushes,

The blackbird chirped, the plover piped, "Come
down!"

Then down and off, and through the fields of clover,
I followed, followed, at my lover's call;
Listening no more to blackbird, thrush, or plover,
The water's laugh, the mill-stream's fret and fall.

ANOTHER YEAR.

“ANOTHER year,” she said, “another year

These roses I have watched with so much care,
Have watched and tended without pain or fear,

Shall bud and bloom for me exceeding fair,—
Another year,” she said, “another year.”

“Another year,” she said, “another year,

My life, perhaps, may bud and bloom again,
May bud and bloom like these red roses here,

Unlike them, tended with regret and pain,—
Another year, perhaps, another year.

“Another year, ah yes, another year,

When bloom my roses, all my life shall bloom ;
When summer comes, my summer too 'll be here,
And I shall cease to wander in this gloom,—
Another year, ah yes, another year.

“For ah, another year, another year,

I 'll set my life in richer, stronger soil,
And prune the weeds away that creep too near,
And watch and tend with never-ceasing toil,—
Another year, ah yes, another year.”

Another year, alas ! another year,

The roses all lay withering ere their prime,
Poor blighted buds, with scanty leaves and sere,
Drooping and dying long before their time,—
Another year, alas ! another year.

And ah, another year, another year,

Low, like the blighted dying buds, she lay,
Whose voice had prophesied without a fear,

Whose hand had trimmed the rose-tree day by
day,

To bloom another year, another year.

SOME DAY OF DAYS.

SOME day, some day of days, threading the street
With idle, heedless pace,
Unlooking for such grace,
I shall behold your face!
Some day, some day of days, thus may we meet.

Perchance the sun may shine from skies of May,
Or winter's icy chill
Touch whitely vale and hill.
What matter? I shall thrill
Through every vein with summer on that day.

Once more life's perfect youth will all come back,
And for a moment there
I shall stand fresh and fair,
And drop the garment care ;
Once more my perfect youth will nothing lack.

I shut my eyes now, thinking how 't will be,—
How face to face each soul
Will slip its long control,
Forget the dismal dole
Of dreary Fate's dark separating sea ;

And glance to glance, and hand to hand in greeting,
The past with all its fears,
Its silences and tears,
Its lonely, yearning years,
Shall vanish in the moment of that meeting.

CECILY.

“O, IF my love would come to me,
Would come to me and speak to me
Out of these shadows dark and dree,
My heart would so much lighter be,
My heart would so much lighter be!”

Sang Cecily, sad Cecily.

“O, if my love would come to me,
And say the words he said to me
Another day, for love of me,
The world would so much brighter be,

The world so much brighter be!"

Sang fair, deserted Cecily.

"O, if my love would come to me,
And hold my hands and look at me,
The while he softly spoke to me,
My life would so much brighter be,
My life would so much brighter be!"

Despairingly sang Cecily.

"But silent and away from me,
He has no word of cheer for me,
For one dark day he doubted me,
And doubting me, grew hard to me,
And doubting me grew hard to me,"

Half bitterly sang Cecily.

“But O, if he would come to me,
Just for a little while to me,
Before he left me, he should see
That I was true as truth could be,
That I was true as truth could be!”

Sang tenderly sweet Cecily.

“O, if he would but come to me
For long enough to learn of me
This precious truth, and say to me
The words he said before to me,
For love of me, for love of me,”

Sang Cecily, fair Cecily,

“My way would so much brighter be,
My cross would so much lighter be ;

And patiently I'd wait and see
Whatever was in store for me,
Whatever was in store for me,"
Sang wistfully poor Cecily.

"But now through shadows dark and dree
He will not help me, who might be
A rock amidst this surging sea,
A shield between the world and me,
A shield between the world and me,"
Sang tearfully sad Cecily.

"And all I ask to comfort me,
Is that he'll come once more to me,
And say the words he said to me
Another day, for love of me,

Another day, for love of me,"

Sang pleadingly sweet Cecily.

"Yet though these shadows dark and dree
Grow dark and darker yet to see,

I will not doubt, as he doubts me,

But still believe he'll come to me,

But still believe he'll come to me!"

With sudden cheer

Sang high and clear

This fond and faithful Cecily.

RIDING DOWN.

O, DID you see him riding down,
And riding down, while all the town
Came out to see, came out to see,
And all the bells rang mad with glee?

O, did you hear those bells ring out,
The bells ring out, the people shout,
And did you hear that cheer on cheer
That over all the bells rang clear?

And did you see the waving flags,
The fluttering flags, the tattered flags,

Red, white, and blue, shot through and through,
Baptized with battle's deadly dew?

And did you hear the drums' gay beat,
The drums' gay beat, the bugles sweet,
The cymbals' clash, the cannons' crash,
That rent the sky with sound and flash?

And did you see me waiting there,
Just waiting there and watching there,
One little lass, amid the mass
That pressed to see the hero pass?

And did you see him smiling down,
And smiling down, as riding down

With slowest pace, with stately grace,
He caught the vision of a face, —

My face uplifted red and white,
Turned red and white with sheer delight,
To meet the eyes, the smiling eyes,
Outflashing in their swift surprise ?

O, did you see how swift it came,
How swift it came, like sudden flame,
That smile to me, to only me,
The little lass who blushed to see ?

And at the windows all along,
O all along, a lovely throng

Of faces fair, beyond compare,
Beamed out upon him riding there !

Each face was like a radiant gem,
A sparkling gem, and yet for them
No swift smile came, like sudden flame,
No arrowy glance took certain aim.

He turned away from all their grace,
From all that grace of perfect face,
He turned to me, to only me,
The little lass who blushed to see !

SOMEBODY'S HUMMING-BIRD.

IN gay groves once you sped
On glancing wing,
Or dipped your gleaming head
In many a spring,
Dew-welling
And up-swelling
From roses red.

Or in some garden fair,
Or glen remote,
While flitting here and there,
You hummed your note

Of pleasure,
For the measure
Of days so rare.

But on no bending bough
In gay green grove,
Or flowery garden now,
You flit and rove,
Sweet comer
Of the summer.
Shall I tell how

Your little feet find rest,
Your wings repose,
Within a golden nest,
Where neither rose

Nor lily,
White and chilly,
Hideth your breast ?

A nest, that's like a throne
Upon a bower,
Where, reigning all alone,
Without a flower
To kiss there,
You never miss there
The brightest rose that's blown.

Where fixt and fast you swing,
Half poised for flight,
On stirless, heedless wing,
Night after night,

While harpers play,
And dancers gay
Through merry measures swing.

Through merry measures, where
A girl's face glances
Beneath its golden hair,
As down the dances
Her twinkling feet
To swift tunes beat,
While you above there,

O ruby-throated Hummer,
In your bower,
Forgetful of the summer
In its flower,

Caught in a snare
Of golden hair,
Watch each new-comer,

With eyes wide and unwinking
In their brightness,
And little head unthinking
Of the slightness
Of its hold
Upon the gold
Gay tresses, overlinking

Curl on curl, round a face,
Rising fair,
Like a lily in its grace,
Or a rare

Blush rose,
When it blows
From the green bud's embrace.

But rose or lily rare,
She has caught you
In a gay golden snare,
And has taught you,
Little Hummer,
That the summer,
Though so fair,

May spread many a net
For unheeding
Little rovers, who forget
Where they 're speeding,

Until, lo !

Ere they know,

They are set

Fast forever in a snare, —

Be its name

Lily, rose, or golden hair,

All 's the same.

So, gay Hummers

Of the summers

Yet to come, — beware !

SYLVIA'S SONG.

THE days are sweet and long,—oh! sweet and
long;

All day I sit and dream, or sing the song
That some one sang for me one summer day,
For me, to me, before he went his way.

The days are sweet and long,—oh! sweet and
long;

And in the sun I sit, and sing my song:
Some day he will come back who went away,
And sing the song I sing from day to day.

The days are long, but sweet, — oh! long, but
sweet ;

Some day I'll hear the music of his feet
Who sang for me, and sang my heart away,
My happy heart, — before he went his way.

Some day, — to-day, perhaps, — he'll come to me ;
And then the days, so long, but sweet to me,
Will lose the burden of "So long, so long!"
And only keep the sweet of all the song.

THORNS.

WHO sees the thorns beneath the crown,
Upon a poet's head?

Who knows they sometimes sing to drown
Some horrid, haunting dread?

Who knows what fears beset their way?

Who knows, who cares indeed,
So sweetness charms within the lay,
That aching temples bleed?

Who knows how much they long to shrink
Misfortune's cruel cup?

Who knows what bitter wine they drink,

Who drain that poison up?

Ah, never say the poet writes

The sweeter for his pain ;

'T is false ! the dying soldier fights,

A bloody field to gain.

“AND A LITTLE CHILD SHALL
LEAD THEM.”

WHERE? into the trifles of life?

Into its folly and sin?

Into its madness and strife,

Shall the little child lead you in?

Into jealousy, envy, and hate,

And the soul's surest wrong,

Which lies in that bitter estate,

Shall the little child lead you along?

Think of the birthright that's yours!

Yours, whom Christ died to save!

Think of the world that endures,
Beyond the dead and the grave!

In view of that wonderful land
Where your inheritance lies,
In view of a little child's hand
To lead you on to the prize,

Think, think if you can of the world's purple glory!
Of its jealousy, envy, and hate,
And add if you can to the old, wicked story,
In view of that splendid estate!

In view of the child, that is waiting to lead
From the misery, madness, and scorn,
O, add if you can, to temples that bleed,
Another sharp, cruel thorn!

WHAT MAY BE.

WHEN the days are longer, longer,
And the sun shines stronger, stronger,
And the winds cease blowing, blowing,
And the winter's chance of snowing
Is lost in springtime weather ;

And the brooks start running, running,
And the bee sits sunning, sunning,
And the birds come, bringing, bringing,
Such good news in their singing
Of love and springtime weather ;

It may be — there's no knowing —

That then, when buds are blowing,

When birds are greeting, greeting,

And all things mating, meeting,

 We two may come together,

 And find our springtime weather.

CIRCE.

You hold my heart in your slender hands,
In your cold, your cruel, careless hands.
In your beautiful hands, fanned by a breath
Like the breath of the rose, it is dying its death ;

In your beautiful hands with their glitter of rings,
Each ring a trophy that scornfully sings
Of other hearts that have lain like mine
On your cruelly beautiful, pitiless shrine ;

Of other hearts that have gone to their death,
Swooned to sleep by that sweet, sweet breath,

That breath of the rose that comes and goes
As the smiling, beautiful lips uncloze,

When night after night down dizzying dances
They follow and follow your dazzling glances,
While round and round by the music whirled,
As I'd follow and follow you over the world!

Then hold me fast in your slender hands,
In your cruelly beautiful, pitiless hands ;
Let me forever be dying my death,
Swooned to sleep by that sweet, sweet breath.

Let me forever be whirling there,
Lost in a trance divinely fair ;
Let me forever be stricken and slain,
And dying with this delicious pain !

MY LADY.

HERE she comes, — my lady, — so fair and so fine
From the gold of her hair to the glitter and shine
Of her Pompadour silk with its ruffles of lace, —
A wonderful vision of fashion and grace.

Here she comes, — my lady, — drawing on the
pink gloves

Which I know, even here, have the scent that
she loves ;

And soft, as she moves her fingers of snow,
I catch in the movement the sparkle and glow

Of the ring that I gave her,—the diamond
solitaire

That marks her “my lady,” in Vanity Fair ;
My lady,—my jewel,—to have and to hold
As her diamond is held,—*in a setting of gold.*

My lady,—my jewel,—would she sparkle and
glow

If into the light I should suddenly go,
And stand where her beautiful eyes would dis-
cover,

In the flash of a moment, the eyes of her lover?

Would she turn to my glance as the diam-
turns

To the light all its rays, till it blushes and bur

Should I, standing thus, in that moment,—her
lover,—

Be the light, all the light of her soul to discover?

Ah, my lady,—my jewel,—so fair and so fine,
Of your soul I have had little token or sign;
When I put on your finger that diamond solitaire,
I knew I was buying in Vanity Fair!

AND now I sit down daily with a face
As still as Death's, and keep an outward grace
Of silence, while the heart within, at Fate,
Clamors and frets behind its iron gate.

MISUNDERSTOOD.

THEY chide you for being so gay ;
You have reckless spirits, they say,
And moods like an April day,

Madeline.

Reckless and flippant and light,
I heard them call you last night,
When your mirth rose to its height,

Madeline.

Reckless and flippant and light,—
I, who knew you aright,
Knew 't was a pitiful slight,
Madeline.

For I knew what none of them guessed,
That, if your heart were at rest,
Your lips would be slower to jest,
Madeline.

Then let them reprove as they may:
If it eases your heart to be gay,
To laugh ever so light, laugh away,
Madeline, Madeline.

OUT OF THE WINDOW.

OUT of the window she leaned, and laughed,

A girl's laugh, idle and foolish and sweet, —
Foolish and idle, it dropped like a call,
Into the crowded, noisy street.

Up he glanced at the glancing face,

Who had caught the laugh as it fluttered and
fell,

And eye to eye for a moment there

They held each other as if by a spell.

All in a moment passing there,—

And into her idle, empty day,

All in that moment something new

Suddenly seemed to find its way.

And through and through the clamorous hours

That made his clamorous busy day,

A girl's laugh, idle and foolish and sweet,

Into every bargain found its way.

And through and through the crowd of the streets,

At every window in passing by,

He looked a moment, and seemed to see

A pair of eyes like the morning sky.

HER LOVER'S FRIEND,

AND OTHER POEMS.

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HER LOVER'S FRIEND.

LAST night I made a solemn vow
Heaven knows I meant to keep; and now,
With all my purpose gone astray,
I have no will to say her nay.
What could I say to her in truth?
What choice have I just now, forsooth,
But straight to serve her at her need;
For, am I not her friend indeed —
Her friend and his? Can I forget
Three months ago, when first I met
Her sweet fair face, and heard her say,
“What, Lawrence’s friend!” then, half in play,

“His friends are mine, you know ;” and so
We laughed, shook hands, and turned to go
Together down the Roman Hill.
Even as she spoke I felt a thrill
Of newer life, a fresh surprise,
I did not care to analyze.
And she? I was her lover's friend ;
That thought was quite enough to send
A deepening dimple round her mouth.
Since then, now east, now west, now south,
From Venice to the Apennine,
And up the Rhone, and down the Rhine,
I've wandered, always at her side,
A sort of walking-stick and guide.
What else was there for me to do
When in this land to her so new,

To me so long familiar grown,
I found her with a chaperone
As inexperienced as herself,
And half the time laid on the shelf
With some neuralgic nerve of pain,
Or mild, mysterious *migraine*;
A brother, too, of scarce more use, —
A boy half wild to make excuse
For some rash venture rashly planned,
To take his pleasure in the land
He knew not of, — what could I do?
Not surely turn and say adieu,
And leave them in this sorry plight.
Besides, I had no need of flight,
It seemed to me, in those first days,
When all her ways I made my ways.

I was her friend, and Lawrence's friend,
To serve her was the natural end
Of such a friendliness as ours :
But when I came to count the hours
That held me from the daily sight
Of her sweet face, I knew, despite
The plausible fine lies I told
Even to myself, that 't was the old,
Old story that had come to me
Three thousand miles across the sea.
Then was the time, I knew, for flight ;
But then I had not measured quite
The weakness of my vaunted strength.
I fancied that within the length
And narrow limit of this chain
Of friendship, I could fast maintain

The outward semblance of that state
Of pulseless calm which mocking Fate
Had thrust upon me from the start ;
But when I thought I had my part
Complete and sure, my marble mask
Adjusted close, sudden the task
That I had set myself became
A maddening torture, and the flame,
Now held in check, I knew, one day
Would break its bonds and have its way
In wild, swift speech, or wild caress.
This was the end, I felt, unless
I turned and fled ; to-morrow night
I had resolved upon my flight,
When comes this message to defeat
My specious purpose, and complete

The irony of mocking Fate,
Which hunts me down like hungry hate.
“Poor Frank,” the message runs, “has met
With serious mischance, upset
At Fiesole, just at the height
Of Badia, — will you come to-night?”
So, pouf! my fine intentions fly
To the four winds of heaven; while I,
Football of Fate again, return
To the sweet Hades where I burn
With untold passion and despair,
Beneath the marble mask I wear;
Until, until some fatal day,
Some fatal hour, I fling away
In one wild moment all disguise,
And stand before her startled eyes

Myself,—a man whose pulses beat
To madder measures than are meet
For any friendship under heaven
That man hath known or woman given,
Throughout the world, since life began ;
For man is, after all, but man, —
A half-wild creature, held and swayed
By impulses that have betrayed
His vaunted wisdom and his dower
Of manly reason since the hour
He walked in Paradise, and found
The limit of his earthly bound.
And I, like all the race, I stand
Within temptation's border-land,
And cheat myself from day to day
With wild imaginings, that stray

Far into that proscribed domain
Which is not mine or mine to gain;
But barred from me by that grim Fate
That I've no power or will—yet wait!
Why cheat myself again? I know
Too well, too well, that I would throw
This thing that we call honor here—
That all men, nay, that *I've* held dear—
To the wild winds of heaven, or hell,
If I but thought that she— Ah, well!
What mad and futile dream is this,
When with the wicked will I miss
The power to win,—the power to win!
There lies my safety, then, within
That bitter fact. What need have I
To fret and fume, then, if the die

Is thus irrevocably cast,
And all her heart is fixed and fast,
Beyond my reach, beyond my grasp?
Beyond my reach! If I should clasp
Her in my arms, and let her know
How all my pulses come and go
For love of her;—if I should strain
Her once against my breast, I'd gain
My heaven with her, against all ties,
All bonds and bars:—no, no more lies!
No fool's pretense to cheat the spell;
To-night, at least, 'fore God I'll tell
The truth,—yes, once for all,—now while
I gird myself to meet her smile,
When I shall look upon her face,
And hear her tender voice, and trace

The blind emotion struggling there
Unconsciously and unaware,
And know that at a touch or word
The sleeping princess would be stirred
Within her heart, and all her soul,
Obedient to my control,
Would turn to mine, as turns the flower
Responsive to the mastering power
Of the one sun within the heaven.
And in that moment would be given
Enough of earthly bliss to me
To pay for all the misery
That I have known or yet may know.
Since Fate, then, has forbade me go,
Perhaps the rest is also planned,
Perhaps ordained, that from her hand

I shall grasp boldly all this bliss,
And lose the world within a kiss.
What is it, then, that holds me back?
What courage is it that I lack?
Since all the truth I have confest,
What holds me from her tender breast?
Not honor, my confession shows,
Nor the world's virtue as it goes.
What, then; what, then? this only, *love!*
Sometimes it happens that above
The strongest passion man may know,
A stronger power will gain and grow,
And hold him from himself, until
Broken upon its wheel, his will
And greed of sense will lie supine,
Conquered, if not destroyed; so mine

May broken be, for her sweet sake ;
So love may conquer love, and break
Its pride of passion and of power,
Crush all its hopes to save its flower
Of love from any soil or stain,
Or shadow of remorseful pain.
For what new bliss I might inspire
Could shield her from the scorching fire
Of fierce remorse, whose withering flame
Would cast a blight of ban and blame
Upon her tender woman's heart,
That no new passion and no art
That I possessed, could ever quite
Remove and leave her life as white
And clean as in the days before
We met. With God's help, then, one more

Sharp struggle with the demon here
Within my breast, and she, "my dear
And only love," unharmed shall go
Of any word of mine, nor know
What traitor passion has possess't
In friendly guise, her own sweet breast.

FOR THE KING.

THIS is the way my hair was fixt

The night, that night I danced with the king, —
Curl over curl, and in betwixt

The piled up mass, a slender string

Of ruby beads running like fire

Against my night-black clouds of hair.

And my dress,—oh, I danced in silk attire,

And the king looked down, and called me fair!

Full twenty years ago since then,—

And such a life-time in between

Of loves and hopes and hates ; yet when,
Just now, "He is dead," they said, that scene

Sprang all at once from under the dust
Of the crowded years, and plain as day,
I saw the king — my king there, just
As he stood on that night, away

In that far back, beautiful time,
When the world was young, and happy, and
fair ;

And I saw myself all in my prime,
With the ruby beads in my night-black hair.

A big brave king was this king of ours
From first to last. Oh, my father knew,

He knew how he fought the Austrian powers
At Novara there, when the bullets flew

Like fiery hail, to Italy's cost.

And how at the close of the day he swore,
On the battle-field so hardly lost,
Shaking his sword wet red with gore,

To make Italy free from end to end.

Oh, my father knew, and we all know now,
That he meant what he said, to be Italy's
friend,

And to keep to the last his kingly vow.

And how he has kept it, well we know —

The people of Italy who were ground

Under the tyrant foot of the foe,
Or fast in priestly tyranny bound.

One by one he has shaken free
The shackles that fettered us, till we stand,
From shore to shore of lake and sea,
A peaceful and united land.

A big brave king from first to last,
But never a courtier; that was a part
For which our soldier was not cast
By nature's mould or worldly art.

But an honest man, that was the name
From first to last he had rightly earned;
And men less honest to their shame,
Courtiers living the life he spurned,

Of smooth deceit, that never spared

Maid or wife in their mad pursuit,

Whispered what they had never dared

Boldly speak for the king's dispute, —

That, coarse of fibre, and coarse of grain,

His pleasures were those of a roystering
groom.

This was the measure, and this the strain,

Of the gossip that found the breadth and
room

Of palace and court to fester in.

But we, the people with whom they said

He spent his moments of roystering sin,

We knew him sound of heart and of head,

And that where he went no withering flame
Followed his feet and marked the way ;
No innocent creature owed her shame
To a king who stooped to kiss and betray.

I was the beauty of the town,
When he danced with me at Piedmont
there,
And much too vain, alas, to frown
At the flattering tongue that called me
fair.

And I cannot tell what might have been,
Or where my feet had gone astray,
If this hero king had stooped to win
My foolish heart ere he went his way.

But not a word he said to me

Could have made my mother's heart afraid,
Though his soldier's speech was blunt, and
free

Of flattering praise for the little maid

Who looked at him with worshiping eyes

Beneath her night-black clouds of hair.

Oh, mother of God, to think of the lies

They have told of him who could shelter and
spare

A foolish, innocent heart like this,

Ready to follow wherever he led,

And barter the world for a royal kiss !

Oh, when Italy judges her royal dead,

Let her think of this record a woman can bring
To add to his score ; then crown him once
more

As Italy's hero and Italy's king,
From the heights of Savoy to Sicily's shore.

THE FAMOUS FREE-LANCE.

(REIGN OF CHARLES THE FIFTH.)

FIVE centuries and more ago,
When English Edward at Bordeaux
Flung back upon the proud French king
His bold reply of threatening
To the imperious French demand,
He little recked that all the land
At sound of the usurper's threat
Would then and there forswear, forget,
Their wild contentions, and unite
For France alone in his despite.
But from his vantage-ground the king
Said to his heralds, "Go and bring

My Breton soldier to me here,
Bertrand Du Guesclin, who is dear
To every loyal heart in France;
Go bring him here, my bold free-lance."
And when he came, this Breton chief,
Whose sword had won broad lands in fief
Throughout the valley of the Seine, —
Restored to France her own again, —
The king, amidst his nobles there,
Turned with a smiling, gracious air
Of gracious greeting to Bertrand,
And said, "Du Guesclin, from my hand
I pray you take my royal sword,
And 'gainst the usurper's ruffian horde
Fight for your king, my brave free-lance,
Henceforth as Constable of France."

Red rose the blood of swift surprise
To Bertrand's cheek. "Ah, sire!" he cries,
"I am not fit, a rough free-lance,
Above these gentlemen of France
To take my rank." But, as he spoke,
From all the assembled throng there broke
A hearty cheer for *Lord Bertrand,*
The chosen soldier of the land!
So, sped alike by prince and king,
He put aside his faltering,
This modest Breton chief, whose name
Already rang with warlike fame;
And buckling on his sovereign's sword,
Rode forth against the invading horde,
With fifty thousand men-at-lance,
The flower and chivalry of France.

All Europe rang with his renown
When, conquering hero, he rode down
To storm and take the rebel band
That held Auvergne's fair border-land.
High beat the French king's heart with pride.
"What may not France become," he cried,
"With brave Du Guesclin for my sword
Against the whole usurping horde!"
Ev'n as he spoke, with eyes that glowed,
Into the palace court-yard rode
A breathless herald for the king.
"What news," the king cried, "do you bring
Of fair Auvergne?" "'Tis ours, my liege."
"Ha, ha!" the king laughed; "and the siege,
How sped the siege?" "The siege sped well."
"And Lord Bertrand?" "O sire, he fell

. When all was won, and at the gate
Is lying now in mournful state.
His last words, sire, to those who bent
Above his couch, before he went,
‘Remember, comrades, when you stand
A hostile force in any land,
The women, children, and the poor
Are not your foes.’” Low to the floor
The herald bowed before the king,
His message ended. “Go and bring
My hero here,” the sovereign said,
In faltering tones,—“my hero dead;
And write above his silent breast,
‘Here lies the bravest and the best,
The truest gentleman of France,—
Bertrañd Du Guesclin, the free-lance.’”

FROM A CONVENT.

How the sun shines to-day down the long,
 busy street,

That I cannot see, where I cannot meet
Beneath its glad glow the faces I know —
God ! to think it is only a swift year ago

I looked on those faces that smiled back at
 me,

As I walked there or rode there as idle and
 free

As they are to-day — to-day, while I pine,
Shut out from their life in this prison of mine.

“Shut out from their life of the world and its
evil,

From temptation and sin, the flesh and the
devil,”

Drones the priest at confession, the abbess at
prayer,

While I listen un comforted, dumb with despair.

Then back to my duties, the weary routine
Of petty dull cares, which they think is to
wean

My passionate heart from its folly and sin,
Purge my soul of the lusts of the flesh, win

My slumbering soul to repentance and shame
Of this stubborn wild will, till spent like a
flame,

I lie at their feet, who once looked above
Their sordid dull earth, when I looked at my
love!

My love! when he held me that night on his
breast, .

When he lifted my face there and prest
His warm kisses to lips that returned
Every kiss with a heart throb, I learned

More of heaven than the priest can reveal
In a million confessions, or the abbess can
feel,

Though she weary the saints with her prayers!
And that night—that night down the parapet
stairs,

When Pietro the spy led them on to discover
Our trysting-place there, was I shamed for my
lover

Or the love that I felt? Oh! Leonardo, Leonardo,
nardo,

When you leapt to your feet and facing the
foe

Held me closer and closer, while you flung in
their teeth

The base words that they spoke, my fond heart
beneath

Its swift shock of terror gave one throb of de-
light!

And Leonardo, Leonardo, my love, on that
night

Mounted higher and higher, rose to heaven
like a flame,

This love which they dare call my sin, and my
shame.

Shame! if twelve months before they had met
us, we two

By the parapet stairs, and all of them knew

We were lovers as now, do you think they 'd
have spurned

Us like that? No, my uncle, the abbé, had
turned

On his heel with a smile, and a word it may
be

Of reproof for the hour, nothing more, and
we,

Half abashed, half elate, had loitered behind,
Well aware by that smile that you'd find
More smiles than reproof on your suit.
Ah, why was the future so mute?

Why, when the gods beckoned on, did we lin-
ger and wait,
Playing lightly with love, while our fate
Lurked grimly and dark overhead?
Why at that hour had no warning voice sped

Straight to our blind, sleeping souls, waked us
there
From this trance that has wrought our de-
spair?

But no; while coy and coquettish I turned
All your earnest to jest, though I yearned

Out of sight for the day or the night
That would bring me again the delight
Of your glance or the touch of your hand,
The Duke, riding by, saw me stand

Looking down from the balcony there
That fronts to the street — and he saw I was
fair !

Then he came with his suit, and we woke from
our trance,
Dropped our masks of gay jest, and you spoke ;
but what chance

Had your name, Leonardo, against a Duke's
name,

Your love suit against a Duke's noble claim ?

What chance had my prayers or my tears when
a crown

'Twixt these prayers and these tears glittered
down

On their sight? When Church and the State
Could be served, what mattered my love or my
hate?

My hate! when it dawned on me then all they
meant

By their smooth lying words, I seemed to re-
lent

From that day, merged my passion in duty,
Donned the Duke's ring, and smiled when he
flattered my beauty —

Tricked them all, Leonardo! matched their cunning and guile

By *my* wit, *my* craft over theirs — the wile

.

Of a woman 'gainst the fine priestly art

Of the abbé's — 'gainst his cool, clever head,
my heart,

Which won and still won, gained time for us
there

To count up our chances of hope or despair,

To plan 'twixt our kisses a sudden bold flight

To Palermo; then over the sea, where no right

Of abbé or priest could divide us, made one

'Neath the eagles of France. But Pietro, base
son

Of the basest of traitors — Pietro the spy
Proved his false, evil blood. God ! with heaven
so nigh

That a devil like that had the power
To change our heaven to his hell in an hour !

Our heaven ! Oh, Leonardo, Leonardo,
Do they think in this prison I'll learn to
forego

This heaven ? In these walls to lose and forget
The warmth of your love ? Fools, I will baf-
fle them yet,

Find my way to your arms ere another year
goes.

Ah, Leonardo, it must be ; God would not im-
pose

This long death in life in this prison for *me* !
Only twenty last year, youth's blood strong
and free

In my veins, youth's fire at my heart !
Oh, Leonardo, Leonardo, *we* to part,
We to wait for that world we know not, when
this
Lifts up to our lips the full measure of bliss !

LADY WENTWORTH.

“SHE shall marry me yet,” he smiling said —
Smiling, and under his breath — but red
As flame his dark cheek glowed, and bale-fire
burned

In his passionate eyes, as he swiftly turned

Out of the sunshine into the shade —

Out of the sunshine she had made

But a moment before — this girl with a face

Whose very frown had a winsome grace,

They used to swear, in that old, old time,

When her beauty was in its wonderful prime,

When her laughing eyes, of golden brown,
Were the toast and rage of Portsmouth town,

Of Hampshire's Portsmouth, there by the sea,
Where the Wentworths ruled and held in fee
Half the country side of rock and shore,
For a hundred and fifty years or more.

"She shall marry me yet!" 'Twas the Went-
worth blood

That rose up then in that turbulent flood,—
The Wentworth purpose that under his breath
Would hold to its passionate will till death.

"She shall marry me yet!" And down he
strode

Across the pathway, across the road,

With a firm, quick step, and a firm, quick heart,
To work his will and to play his part.

And a difficult part it was to play,
For the Wentworth blood ran either way, —
His mother's blood that held him tied
By kinsman bonds on either side.

But as mother's blood leaves stronger trace
Than father's blood in a turbulent race,
It may have been that his willful way
Had the stronger current to move and sway.

At all events, as the months wore on,
And no tidings came from her Cousin John,
To the beautiful toast of Portsmouth town,
The Wentworth temper rose up to drown

The passionate Wentworth love in her breast,
And the Wentworth pride helped on the
rest :

And six months after her laughing scorn
Of her dark-eyed suitor, suing forlorn,

She stood by his side one autumn day,
A beautiful bride : he had won his way ;
But the gossips said that a bride never wore
In Portsmouth town such a look before.

Seven years after John Wentworth came
Back to his home with a foreign fame :
Back he came to rule and to reign,
As the Wentworths had ruled and ruled
again,

From father to son, in Hampshire State.
Seven years after: why he tarried so late —
So late and so long in a foreign land —
Was a riddle not easy to understand.

Yet late as he came, a welcome burned
In a hundred hearth-fires. Wherever he turned
A hand stretched out and a smile awaited
This kinsman of theirs so long belated.

But amid this lavish neighborly cheer
He missed a face he had once held dear.
“My Cousin Frances: where doth she hide?”
He questioned at last. “She watches beside

A sick man’s bed: a good nurse, I should say,
To keep the blue-devil bailiffs away.”

That night John Wentworth knocked at the door
Of his cousin's house. A foot on the floor,

A whisper of silk, and there she stood.

In that moment John Wentworth's cousinly mood
Melted away like frost at the fire.

He thought he had killed the old desire ;

He thought that love and hate both lay

Slain by the past at that long late day ;

He thought — but what matters it now

The thought that *had* been, when on cheek and
brow

Flames the signal torch from his wakened heart ?

What matters it now the cousinly part

He had fancied was his, when his pulses beat
With that swift, wild throb, as their glances
meet?

But he curbed the Wentworth temper awhile,
As he bent in greeting, and hoped, with a smile,
That he found her well. Hearing the state
Of her goodman's health, he could not wait

His cousinly sympathy to convey.
A tedious illness he had heard them say ;
But the town was eloquent of her care,
Which had certainly left her no less fair

Than he remembered her seven years since —
He turned a moment as he saw her wince —

Turned, and with a purpose fell,
In a sneering, passionate tone, "Ah, well!

"Women, we know, have a potent charm
To ward themselves from trouble and harm."
She caught the sneer, and stayed him there,
With a passionate cry: how did he dare,

Who had played so falsely these seven long
years,

To fling at *her* feet his idle sneers?

"*I* false!" He laughed. "Madam, where went
Those fine love-letters I foolishly sent

"Across the seas in those old, old days?

I waited long—'t is a pretty amaze

You feign, my cousin — I waited long
For a word or a sign, for my faith was strong

“In that old, sweet time ; but the months went
by,

And never a line came back, and I
Still clung to my faith, till a morning in May
There came to me news of a wedding-day

“Here in Portsmouth town, and the bride
Was the girl who had stood at my side
And sworn to be mine six months before —
You shiver, my cousin : the wind from the shore

“Blows harshly to-night.” A gesture here
Checked his bitter reproach his menacing sneer,

And a hoarse voice cried, "John Wentworth,
wait

Ere you dower me with the dower of hate.

"No letter of yours from over the sea
In that old, old time came ever to me;
Day after day the months went by —
Day after day, and what was I

"But a maiden scorned? Day after day
The months went by; when I heard them say
That John Wentworth stayed
To woo and win an English maid,

"My spirit rose like our swift shore tide —
'Twas the Wentworth temper, the Wentworth
pride —

And — your cousin and mine had wooed me
long :

His love was sure and my hate was strong —

“ Quick, passionate hate for the suitor fine,
The false, false gallant who over his wine
Could pledge new loves while the old love
waited,
Faithful and fond, this lover belated.”

“ Sweetheart ! ” Back she started in swift af-
fright

At this fond, bold cry, and the red turned
white

In her oval cheek. A moment more,
And swiftly striding across the floor,

This lover belated, who missed his bride
Seven years ago, is at her side ;
And the fond, bold voice on her listening ear
On her listening heart, over every fear,

Like a rising river, gains and gains,
While unreckoned, unheeded, the swift night
 wanes,
Till the clock strikes twelve on the landing
 stair ;
Then John Wentworth turns with a gallant air,

And embraces his cousin as a kinsman may,
Though all the gossips be looking that way.
Yet his parting words, whispered low in her ear,
Were never meant for a gossip to hear.

But long before the spring had come
To Portsmouth shores, in many a home
The gossips' tongues were making bold
With the Wentworth name ; and the story told,

Which ran through the town like a breath of
flame,

Was this : that John Wentworth never came
To his cousin's house but by signal or sign,
A silken scarf or a kerchief fine

Flung out of the casement, or at night
In the western window a candle's light.
And the gossips, observant, would smile, and say,
" So ! the sick man sleeps at this hour of the
day ! "

Or at evening, when the candle flares
In the western window, "Dame Frances' cares
Are over early, it seems, to-night."

If Dame Frances caught this bale and blight

Of the gossips' tongues, little she recked:

No Wentworth yet was ever checked

By a gossip's tongue, however bold.

But there comes a day when the kerchief's fold

Is missed at the casement, and that night

No candle flares its signal light.

When another morning dawns again

The tolling Portsmouth bells explain

.

The missing candle, the kerchief fine.

Dame Frances now of signal or sign

Has little need ; in the chamber there,
Where a sick man yesterday claimed her care,

A dead man lies in solemn state ;
And peering at the linen and plate
Down stairs, the neighbors, under their breath,
Talk of the sick man, and his death ;

Of the widow's prospects ; and one more bold
Hints that ere the year's grown old
The Wentworth mansion across the way
Will have a mistress fine and gay.

But ere a month had passed of the year,
All the seamstresses far and near,
In and out of Portsmouth town,
Were sewing fast at a wedding-gown

Of brocaded satin, foreign and rare,
For dame Frances Atkinson to wear.
“Shame!” cried the gossips, far and wide,
And “Shame!” cried the Wentworths in their
pride —

All the Wentworth kin in Hampshire State.
This haste was unseemly; she'd only to wait
In her widow's weeds a year and a day,
And not a gossip could say her nay.

Then up she spoke, this willful dame —
Scornfully spoke, with a tongue of flame:
“Seven years I have served the Wentworth
pride;
Seven years with a Wentworth courage lied

“To the world with my smiling face,
To find at the end — no sovereign grace
To save my soul, but a curse alone,
The curse of a lie that shamed my own!

“Cheated and tricked seven weary years,
Won by a lie — no lying tears
Have I to waste, no time to wait
On the man who dies seven years too late!”

Scared and shocked the Wentworths stared
At this reckless dame, whose passion dared
To cast at the dead man, scarcely cold
In his fresh-turned grave, these accusals bold.

Scared and shocked, but never a word
Of ban or blame was ever heard

From their lips again, and come the day
When my Lady Wentworth, fine and gay,

Reigned in the Wentworth mansion there,
Not a gossip in Portsmouth but spoke her fair.
But under their breaths, when twilight fell,
Under their breaths, they would sometimes tell

The old, old story of signal and sign,
The candle flame, and the kerchief fine ;
And under their breaths would croak a fear
That my lady had lent but too willing an ear

To the evil whispered against the dead,
The doubtful tale so suddenly sped
From mouth to mouth, while for yea or nay,
Helpless and dumb the dead man lay.

But never upon my lady's face,
Never a doubt showed sign or trace,
As she looked the curious gossips down
In the little world of Portsmouth town—

Never a doubt from year to year,
Never a doubt, and never a fear ;
For whatever the truth of the troubled past,
My lady had come to her own at last !

THE KING'S KISS.

“How long,” he asked, “will you remember
this —

How long?” Then downward bent
His kingly head, and on her lips a kiss
Fell like a flame — a flame that sent
Through every vein
Love’s joy and pain ;

“How long,” he asked, “will you remember
this ?”

“How long?” She lifted from his breast a
cheek

Red with her sacred love,

Yet when her redder lips essayed to speak,

And when her heart did move

To answer grave and sweet,

Somehow a smile unmeet

Broke waywardly across red lips and cheek.

“How long, how long, will I remember this?

Say *you*,” she murmured low —

“Say you” — and while she trembled with her
bliss,

That smile went to and fro

Across her flushing face,

And hid a graver grace —

“Say you, how long will you remember this?”

He bent above her in that moment's bliss,

He held her close and fast;

“How long, how long, will I remember this?

Until I cross at last,

With failing, dying breath,

That river men call Death—

So long, so long, will I remember this!”

But, when apart they stood, did he remember

His words that summer day?

Did he remember through the long December

The warmth and love of May,

The warmth, and love, and bliss,

The meaning of that kiss,

When kingdoms stood between—did he re-
member?

Ah! who can say for him? For her we know

The king's kiss was her crown;

For her we know no agony of woe,

No other smile or frown,

Could make her heart forswear

That summer morning there,

Beneath the forest trees of Fontainebleau.

BARBARA.

THERE'S her picture, hanging on the wall, —

Copley's work, a century ago ;

See the grace with which that silken shawl

Droops from off the shoulders' rosy snow !

See the carriage of that haughty head ;

See the latent scorn in those dark eyes ;

Only the mournful mouth of blossom red

All the haughty splendor soft belies.

“My Lady Barbara” they called her then ;

'Twas in the old gay days of George's reign.

My Lady Barbara! In the eyes of men

No fairer beauty ever breathed disdain

From lovely lips or scornful, radiant eyes;

Yet all her beauty brought no dower but pain,

For all her beauty could not win the prize

That she had staked her hope of heaven to
gain.

She laughed at love and lovers till *he* came,

And laughed the more, and flung her idle threat

Of idle scorn, when others spoke his name,

And said, "My haughty lady'll get

"Her match if not her master here."

Her scornful, laughing threat rang up and
down,

And where he rode or feasted met his ear ;

And where he rode or feasted though the
town

She held aloof awhile with cunning guile.

He gave no sign ; a stranger in the place,
He rode and feasted, gave back smile for
smile.

One night he smiled upon *her* waiting face,

Then bent a moment, looked and smiled again.

Low laughed she under breath : " So this
is he

Who conquers women's hearts, this startled
swain,

Whose heart is in his eyes, 't is clear to see."

“Whose heart is in his eyes” — and thinking
this,

She gave him smile for smile, and glance for
glance.

He came at her command ; she did not miss
His presence day or night, at feast or dance.

What was it that she missed as time went by !

What was it that she sought and sought in
vain,

In soft and courtly phrase, and glance of eye ?

What was it that she missed and could not
gain ?

“His heart is in his eyes,” she’d lightly said,

And left unsaid the vow to win and wear ;

And looking in those eyes, her own heart bled,
And broke at last with love's despair.

Her master, not her match, she'd found indeed ;
And, like the fair, fond women Shakespeare
drew,

She flushed and paled with love, and gave no
heed

That all the jeering town her passion knew.

No vision of the truth pierced through her
pride,

Till winter came and went, and spring was
nigh ;

He but delayed, she thought, to seek a bride,
His reverent love ranked over-high.

And, dreaming thus, poor sweetheart, fell the
blow,

And half the town stood staring at the sight :
'T was at the Province House, beneath the glow
Of festal lamps one festal night.

High beat her heart beneath her bodice-belt ;
Her cheek was like the rose, her eyes
Like stars, triumphant, fond, as if she felt,
“To-night, to-night, my beauty wins the
prize !”

A moment thus she stood superbly fair,
An image of exultant youth and grace,
That seemed to say, “With time and care
I have no part nor place.”

Then all at once a whisper met her ear :

“Look ! there he comes, his sweetheart on
his arm,

The girl from over seas.” She turned, without
a fear,

Without a thought of coming ill or harm,

This proud, unconscious Barbara, to see

Whose sweetheart was so trumpeted by
fame,

And she not know ; she turned to see

His face — his cruel, splendid face — that
came

Between her soul and heaven : his face

Bent smiling down, smiling and fond

To seek another face, not hers ; another face —

Good God ! was this the sweetheart from beyond

The seas they 'd whispered of? No, no, 't was chance —

Some fool had blundered ; this was she
Of whom the provost's wife had spoke, her
guest from France,

Late come, to find herself unknown, and
he

In kindness, like a gallant knight,

Paid his devoirs in courteous word and deed,
His gentle service, as a gallant might
To serve a stranger's need.

And with the thought a smile across her face
 Flashed lightning-like ; for there he came,
This gallant knight, with sudden, hastening
 pace,

And smiles to meet her own. Like flame,

Her cheek, that had been pale with pain, now
 burned ;

Like flame, her fierce heart leaped with love
 and pride :

“Mine ! mine !” her eyes declared. He touched
 her hand, then turned.

To her who hung upon his arm. “My bride,

“Come Easter-morn,” he said ; “a stranger here,
 Brought by her kinsman to my waiting love ;

If Lady Barbara, whose welcome cheer

I know so well, would welcome *her*, above

“All favors would a bridegroom prize” —

Here all at once a smothered sound

Broke off his silken speech of lies ;

And cries of “Coward ! caitiff ! hound !”

Rang down the room ; and Barbara stood

Incarnate Hate, who but a little space

Ago was Love’s ideal womanhood.

Thus for a moment gloomed her face,

And, like the caitiff she had named him there,

He shrank beneath her withering word and
look.

Not this the triumph he had planned with care,
Not this the end, this mighty wrath that
shook

And swayed the throng, till men — ay, those
whose suit

She'd laughed to scorn in other days —
Turned judge of him, as there he cowered,
mute,

Before the lightning of her speech and gaze !

The very air seemed full of menace then,
Of muttering thunder, soon to break and
fall

In storm upon his recreant head ; when,
Almost as she spoke, they saw her tall,

Straight figure sway and bend, her eyes grow
dim ;

And, ere a hand could reach to save, she fell,
A senseless heap, prone at the feet of him
Whose mocking love had turned her heaven
to hell.

Then for a moment all the throng lost sight
Of aught but that still semblance lying there,
And only when they saw returning light
Of life upon her face they whispered, "Where

"Is he, this coward, who has fled before
His dastard's work?" Ay, where was he?
Not then, not there, nor ever any more
They saw his cruel face : across the sea

That very night, with her whom he that night
Proclaimed his bride, come Easter-morn,
He fled away. That very night,
Indifferent of all her scorn,

Dead to revenge, forgetting hate,
In blessèd trance poor Barbara lay, —
In blessèd trance that seemed to wait
From hour to hour, from day to day,

Until a day rose dim with rain,
An April day, chill and forlorn ;
Then broke the trance, and out of pain
She slipped from earth — on Easter-morn !

A TRAMP.

HIS STORY.

TRAMP? Yes, I'm a tramp, and one of the
worst of the kind,

Thinks my lady who peers at me there through
the bars of her blind,

As I lounge in the shade of the tree here, and
greedily munch

The broken bread-crusts which she 'd airily call
my lunch.

My lunch! That sounds well to a man who
for forty-eight hours

Hasn't broken his fast until now — now, while
he devours

The broken bread scraps that stick in his starv-
ing throat,

Which he cools now and then, as my lady
takes pains to note,

From a rummy old flask, which she thinks she
can smell

From behind her blind-bars, as the vintage of
hell.

She'd never believe, though I poured it out at
her feet,

That it was only a draught of the ale that
Adam found sweet.

How her impulse of charity chills at this vil-
lanous sign,

While, through the window below, on the side-
board carven and fine,

I can see the decanters filled with old Madeira
and sherry,

For respectable lips to drain, till the wits grow
mellow and merry!

Well, my lady, I wonder what you would
say,

If I should rise in my rags, and tell you that
in my day

I had toasted as fair as you in wine of the
choicest and best,

And been of the rich and the gay a courted
and flattered guest?

Believe me? No, you'd turn with scorn from
my tale,

And send for the nearest police to lodge me
in jail

For a lying vagrant and nuisance, plying the
trade

Of a swindler for the chance of a theft to be
made.

And the police: I can see my gentleman's
face

As the story is told — a tramp is a tramp, all
base

Through and through, a bundle of rags and of
lies,

One begetting another, both stripped clean of
disguise

In that sharp professional sight on the watch
for a thief.

And I can hear my gentleman's voice, curt with
unbelief,

As he stabs me here and there with a question
or two :

*Yes, a curious story, indeed, if it chance to be
true !*

*But men so high in the world wouldn't let an
old comrade dine*

*On beggarly crusts ; they'd feast him on wood-
cock and wine !*

Would they ? Ah, my professional friend !

Your wisdom is not of this world of "the
upper West End."

Of crime and of vice you've a knowledge far
beyond mine ;

But of the friendship that lavishes woodcock
and wine

On the man who's at odds with Fortune and
Fate,

A poor, shabby devil without worldly estate,
Who has once been as high as now he is
low,

I think I may venture to swear that I know
All the ins and the outs; and the outs, let me
say,

By a heavy majority carry the day!

But 't was never the way of the world to look
back

For the unfortunate rider who slipped in the
track;

Once down, he may scramble to foot as he can;
But the chance is, once down, that a luckier
man

Closes in to the line and fills up his place,
And he finds ere he knows that he's out of
the race.

So I slipped from the track, and the world
doubtless thinks

Lost the race like a coward who shivers and
shrinks

From the brunt of the battle, sneaking out of
the strife,

For the shameless, sweet sloth of the vaga-
bond's life.

Oh, my world ! so you judge from your fine,
airy height

Of respectable sin, the poor luckless wight

Who has lost in the race and drifted below

Your chariot-wheels. God ! what do you know

Of the straits men may come to when flung to
the wall,

Out of pluck, out of pocket, — in short, stripped
of all

That can give a man reason or courage to face
His fellows once more in the heat of the
race !

You to talk in that virtuous, copy-book way
Of the certain rewards that are sure to repay
Honest worth and endeavor ; you to preach
and to prate

As you sit at your ease high in church and in
state

Of adversity's uses and poverty's gains !

Oh, my world ! let me say, as a fool for your
pains,

And a selfish old braggart, you'll rank with the
best ;

While I — well, I sat with you once as your
guest,

And I know you, my world, for your wisdom
was mine

In those days when we feasted on woodcock
and wine.

But since then I have tasted a vintage that
brings

A wisdom denied to courtiers and kings !

'Tis the vintage that's grown from the vine
we may call

The vine of experience, and bitter as gall

It has shown me the folly of faith here below

In those fine little saws and proverbs that glow

Like a coal from the altar of heaven till the day
That we bring them to bank with their promise to pay.

There's that one about honest worth and endeavor,

With its certain rewards. Well, perhaps I'm not clever

At counting rewards; perhaps I should find
My reward in my conscience, and thus go it blind.

But though I have kept this conscience as fair
Perhaps as my lady who peers at me there,
I am not of that sort of ethereal stuff
To sup on a conscience and find it enough.
Yet no epicure's feast do I hanker for now,
But that promise fulfilled, "By the sweat of
thy brow

Shalt thou eat." A curse, yet a pledge, there
it stands,

To crumble and fall at the touch of my hands,
Like the fine little proverbs I mouthed in the
days

When, a fool, I fancied I knew all the ways
Of life and the world. Good God! did I know
That one day I should wander like this to and fro
Through the breadth of the land, a man with-
out stain

Of a crime, seeking vainly that toil that shall
gain

The bread and the breath of his life, his place
Once more among men, a chance to lift up his
face

Unashamed to the light of the heavens, and the
gaze

Of the curious world, from whose open highways
He has shrunk step by step in his terrible straits,
With the demon of Death and Despair that waits
For its prey, beckoning on and still on day by
day ;

While afar, in the life I had left, in the open
highway

Of the world, men, my fellows, a brief space ago,
Sitting snug in high places, well fed, and aglow
With that wisdom that carries the fool's cur-
rent stamp,

Set their dull wits to solve *that problem the*
tramp !

Not a man like themselves, but a "creature," a
"thing,"

A nuisance to legislate over, and bring

To the test of the law, by which shall abide
This "creature" and "nuisance," they calmly
decide.

So you gather us up, so you measure us all,
A bundle of tares, nothing else. O Saul
Midst the prophets! O fool deaf and blind!
While you fashion your laws for *men*, not *man-*
kind,

I, out of your world, ask myself if the Man —
The Man we call Christ — would have followed
your plan?

SWEET SIXTEEN.

“You think the world is only made
For you and such as you,” he said.
Laughing aloud in boyish scorn,
Of boyish mirth and mischief born.

She never turned from where she stood
Prinking her little silken snood
Of silken curls before the glass;
She never turned to see him pass,

Nor answered him, save with a laugh
That half confessed his boyish “chaff.”
But left alone, confronted there
With her own image fresh and fair,

A sudden blush lit up her face
With newer youth and fresher grace,
And eyes that were demurely fixed
A moment since, with thought unmixed,

Upon the smoothing of a tress,
Now sparkled soft with consciousness ;
“Why not, why not?” she lightly cried,
Out of the gay exultant pride,

The sweet wild insolence of youth ;
“Why not for me, for me, forsooth,
And such as me the world be made,
For me its glories all arrayed ?

“For since the world and life begun,
What poet’s measures have not run

Through all the strains of minstrelsy
In praise of me, and such as me?

“For youth and beauty in their day
Have ruled the world and will for aye.
One, greatest of them all, has sung
In verse that through the world has rung.

“And here’s my day to live and reign,
To take the joy and leave the pain
From this old world, that’s made for me,
For me, for me and such as me!”

Gay laughter rang through every word,
And yet beneath the laughter stirred

A something more than jesting play, —
Just sweet sixteen that very day,

She half believed in sober truth,
In the sweet insolence of youth,
That all for her, a foolish maid,
The world's gay glories were arrayed.

HE AND SHE.

I'LL be at the window as he goes by,

As he goes by,—

He'll lift his head to look at the sky,

The western sky,

To see if the sun has set for fair,—

And suddenly there

Against the sky in the golden air

He'll see a pair

Of familiar eyes ; and I shall see

As he looks at me

A sudden smile and a nod, maybe ;

All this in three

Or perhaps in four swift moments — then,

Ah, then,

In another moment the world of men

For him, or, when

The street is turned, a different face

To take my place,

While I by my window here retrace

Each line of the face

Which smiled at me, as it passed me by

With a glance of the eye

That swept me in with the western sky,

The sunset sky.

To-morrow I shall be at the window when

He passes again ;

He will smile and nod — and then, ah then —

The same old story over again !

REPENTANT.

DAY after day, I look for and wait for

The glimpse of her figure, the sight of her
face ;

Day after day, too soon or too late for

Her going or coming, I trace and retrace,

With hope born anew, the ways that she
passes ;

With hope born anew, each morning I miss
her.

A winter of search, and now the young grasses
Are breaking the earth : shall I meet, shall I
kiss her

To-morrow, or next day? Oh, my little hurt darling,

Give me chance for a moment to comfort
and heal

The hurt that I gave you ; just a moment, my
darling,

Let me look in your face, in your eyes, to
reveal

All my heart with its passion of love and its
sorrow,

Its grief and contrition, its pain for your
pain :

Ah, thus for a moment, to-day, or to-mor-
row,

To show her my heart — *to win her again !*

THE WRECK OF THE GLOUCESTER FISHING FLEET.

HINTS of the spring were in the air,
And March winds had a breath of May
That whispered hope and not despair,
The other day, the other day,

When came to us that dreadful tale
Of how the Gloucester fleet went down
In that wild February gale,
When we were safe within the town:

When we were safe and did not know,
That not for twenty years or more,

Had such a tempest come to blow
Across the cruel shoaling shore

Of George's Bank, as blew that day,
When high upon its treacherous tide
The Gloucester fleet at anchor lay
In all its comely strength and pride.

More than a hundred men went down —
The whole stanch fleet, with every sail, —
While we were safe within the town,
Sure they would weather every gale.

Perhaps we danced, perhaps we sung,
Without a hint of pain or death,
While they upon the rocks were flung,
Fighting for life with bated breath.

When, vanquished, they at length went down,
They must have thought in that despair
Of wife and child in Gloucester town,
And breathed for them one piteous prayer

Of wild appeal—for times were hard
Upon old Gloucester's sandy shore,
And men were scarce to watch and ward
And keep the wolf from out the door ;

And now, and now ! what would they do,
These wives and children in their strait ?
Oh brave wrung hearts, if you but knew
How all New England, at your fate,

Sprung to its feet, stretched forth its hands,
To keep the wolf you dreaded so

From out your homes on Gloucester sands !

But ah, perhaps, if *we* could know,

You still keep watch and ward above

The cherished homes you left behind,

And read with eyes of clearer love

The meaning that to us is blind,

Of that dark day when you went down,

Off George's Bank, with every sail,

While we were safe within the town,

In that wild February gale.

THE REBEL FLOWER.

ACROSS the garden paths she led
Her Tory guest, with stately tread ;
A Boston beauty in her prime,
With courage equal to the time
That tried men's souls, her loyal heart
Cried out against the craven part
It was her irksome fate to play
As courteous hostess on that day.

A gracious, gallant air he wore,
A gracious, gallant rank he bore,
This Tory guest, yet well she knew
Beneath the air, the rank, perdue,

A crafty treacherous purpose hid,
As poisons lurked beneath the lid
Of jeweled caskets long ago,
When every friend might prove a foe.

The garden beds were gay with bloom, —
Fair treasures which have given room
Long since at Fashion's stern decree
To splendors from across the sea.
For close beside the stately rose,
No tyranny can e'er depose,
The sturdy camomile did lift
Its myriad blossoms' snowy drift.

“What flower is this?” The Tory guest
Half paused to ask in idle quest.

A moment's thought, then sweet and clear,

"The Rebel flower, we call it here,"

She answered him, this Boston dame

Of lovely mien and rebel fame.

"How's this?" he laughed; and laughing
sent

A keen look at the fair face bent

In modest musing on the flower

She'd newly named within that hour.

"How's this, sweet dame, and why, pray tell,

So fair a flower a name so fell

Should win and wear?" A swift smile sped

Across her face, then slow she said,

"Because, my lord, this flower that's won

Your meed of praise, when trampled on,

Springs from the dust and thrives anew
In fresher vigor than it knew
Before such blows of fortune came,—
Thus rightly winning name and fame.”
“Ah, ha!” laughed out the Tory guest
At this bold speech, “a pretty jest
I’ faith, sweet dame, and bravely said.
When next we meet, perhaps a tread

Of weightier heels may have crushed out
These boasted claims, and put to rout
Your rebel flowers till name and fame
Are lost beneath the dust of shame.”
She laughed him back, with laughter born
Of gay disdain and sparkling scorn.
“When next we meet, my lord,” she said,
“This rebel flower will lift its head

In lustier vigor than before,
And name and fame for evermore
Shall flourish bravely in the land
Despite th' oppressors' heel or hand!"

When next they met, my lord had laid
His sword beneath the rebel blade,
And she who prophesied the fate
Of British valor, stood in state
On British soil, an honored guest,
Wearing upon her lovely breast,
In smiling triumph for that hour,
A posy called "The Rebel Flower!"

THE WAGER.

ONE by one they sped by us, their sails dripping wet,

For the heavens had opened their sluices of rain ;

And I sat in the bows of the little Coquette,
Scoring the time with Major Duane.

The wind was blowing from south and from east, —

A beautiful breeze just spoiled by the rain ;
And there I had bet twelve pairs at the least
Of “ Couvoisier’s best ” with this Major Duane :

Staked them all on that little Alarm, Florry dear,
Which had won me my gloves again and again,
If the sky had been decently sunny and clear,—
But my fate was to lose to this Major Duane!

And 't was Harrison Blake who advised me to
stake

On the little Alarm, which but for the rain
Had won me my gloves; though I never told
Blake

I was going to bet there with Major Duane.

Poor Harry! he has always been jealous, you
know,

The whole summer through, of this Major
Duane;

And now — well, it's queer how oddly things
go,

For the Major has won by this chance of the
rain

Something more than the gloves : for I staked
in a freak

My hand with the gloves, hardly thinking again
Of the matter, my dear, so swift went the week,
And so sure did I feel that this Major Duane

Would lose while I won. And now 't is quite
clear

To *my* mind, at least, — that just for that rain
I could n't with honor refuse, Florry dear,
To pay up my debts to Major Duane.

IF I WERE YOU, SIR.

If I were you, sir,
I would not sue, sir,
For any woman's love day after day :
I'd never stand, sir,
At her command, sir,
Year in and out in this fond, foolish way.

Across my face, sir,
I'd have the grace, sir,
Or mother-wit, to pull a gayer mask,
And wait to find, sir,
What was her mind, sir,
Before I'd grovel at her feet to ask.

All very well; sir,
For you to tell, sir,
Of that grand poet in the olden time,
Whose fine advice, sir,
Was so concise, sir,
In that immortal strain of gallant rhyme.

It does not fit, sir,
Your case a bit, sir;
He never meant a man should pray and pray
With such an air, sir,
Of poor despair, sir,
For any woman's love day after day.

If you will read, sir,
The verse with heed, sir,

.

You'll see it runs as clearly as it may,
That every man, sir,
Should take his answer,
With manly courage, be it yea or nay.

Then cease your sighs, sir :
No man's a prize, sir,
In any woman's sight, just let me say,
Who's not too high, sir,
To sigh and die, sir,
For any woman's love, day after day.

THREE DESTINIES.

THREE roses nod and talk
Across a garden walk ;
One, lifting up her head,
Clad all in damask red,
Cries gayly in her pride,
"To-night, full far and wide,
My beauty shall be seen,
Adorning Beauty's queen."

"And I," the blush-rose cries,
"Shall be the envied prize
A lover shall convey,
Before the end of day,

Unto a maiden fair,
And she will kiss and wear
My blushes in her breast :
There I shall sleep and rest."

"And I," the white rose sighs, —
"Before the sunshine dies,
I shall lie hid from sight
Within a grave's dark night ;
But not in vain my bloom,
If I have cheered the gloom,
Or helped to soothe and bless
A mourner's loneliness."

A DEUX TEMPS.

YES, this is our dance, this waltz from the
Duchess ;

What is that you are saying ? —

You thought I was playing

You false, with this waltz, this dance from the
Duchess ?

You thought I had rather be sitting and talk-
ing

With that little M'Manners

There, under the banners,

Or it may be, perhaps, in the corridors, walk-
ing,

Instead of remembering this dance here with
you, sir ;

This dance from the Duchess,
The lovely Grand Duchess,
The sweetest *deux temps* ? Ah, if you but knew,
sir,

How I dote on the Duchess, with its gliding
and sliding

Soft measure for measure,
You 'd know from such pleasure
My feet would never go straying or hiding.

What is that ? You might have known it was
merely,

This special sweet measure,

The *dance*, not the pleasure
Of dancing with *you* here? Well, really, you've
nearly

Persuaded me, sir, that such *was* the reason;
And I'm sure I would fain, sir,
If you go on in this strain, sir,
Walk and talk with M'Manners to the end of
the season.

And to the end of my life, too, perhaps is my
meaning?

Well, no; for M'Manners
There under the banners,
Just when we encountered you waiting and lean-
ing

Against the bay-window, had confessed a relation

I guessed days ago —

His engagement, you know,

To that little — Now, Harry, *don't* kiss me
before all creation!

IN THE DARK.

THIS is my little sweetheart dead.

Blue were her eyes, and her cheek was red
And warm at my touch when I saw her last,
When she smiled on me and held me fast.

With the light, soft clasp of her slender hand ;
And now beside her I may stand and stand
Hour after hour, and no blush would rise
On her dead white cheek, and her shut blue
eyes

Will never unclothe at my kiss or call.
If this is the end ; if this be all

That I am to know of this woman dear ;
If the beautiful spirit I knew, lies here,

With the beautiful body cold and still ;
If while I stand here now and thrill
With my yearning memories sore at heart
For a token or sign to rend apart

The pitiless veil, there is *nothing* beyond ;
If this woman, so fair, so fine, so fond
A week ago — fond, fine and fair
With the life, the soul that shone out there,

In her eyes, her voice, which made her in truth
The woman I loved ; if this woman forsooth
Is dead as this dead clay that lies
Under my gaze with close-shut eyes,

Then what is the meaning of life, when death
Can break it all, as breaks at a breath
The child's blown bubble afloat in the sun?
What is the meaning, if all is done

When this breath goes out into empty air,
Like this childish plaything, flimsy and fair?
What is the meaning of love's long pain,
The yearning memories that rend and strain

•

The living heart or the living soul,
If this is the end, if this is the whole
Of life and death,—this little span
That drops in the dark before the plan

Which the brain conceives is half complete,
Making life but the bubble's empty cheat?

When, a year ago, through all the maze
Of speculation's far-hung haze,

I followed on with careless tread,
I had not looked then on my dead—
My dead so infinitely dear,
My dead that coldly lying here

Mocks my fond heart with semblance fair,
Chills me with measureless despair.
Then I could calmly measure fate
With Nature's laws, and speculate

On all the doubts that science brings;
Now, standing here, what is it springs
Within my soul, that makes despair
Not quite despair? O fond, O fair,

Oh, little sweetheart, dead to me,
Somewhere or other thou must wait for me,
Somewhere, somewhere, I shall not look in vain
To find thy living face, thy living love again.

IN EXTREMIS.

OH, my loveling, to shield you and cover you
From all the bleak winds that riot and rave,
To have and to hold you, to love and watch
over you, —

This is the boon of all others I crave.

Ah! is it God or blind Fate that denies me
This boon that alone can give value to life?
Ah! is it God or blind Fate that defies
me

To turn all your innocent days into strife?

Oh, innocent days, with never a blight there,

Oh, innocent heart of my innocent dove,

God give me the grace, if He gives me no right
there,

To show her the best, not the worst, of my
love!

God give me the grace to give her, if need be,

Only passionless peace, only tenderest care,

Through year after year, though agonies lead
me

Still year after year to the gates of despair.

Let me suffer alone the pangs of repression ;

Let me conquer and die, if need for my
love,

Or conquer and live through the "clefts of
confession,"

While unconquered, unharmed, rests my in-
nocent dove.

PROPHECY.

I THOUGHT our olden friendship dead,
Or with the long years long since fled;
Yet a sweet, faint ghost came back
Down the winding dizzy track,

As we met upon the street,
And a moment stopped to greet, —
Making some cool, common speech,
Just a moment, each to each;

Knowing each how wide our ways
Led apart from those far days;

How other hopes and plans came in,
With their promises, to win

Thought and soul and heart away
From the memories of that day.
Yet as there we met and talked,
As you turned, and, turning, walked

Down the street a pace or two,
Something cordial, old yet new,
Stirred within me sweet and faint,
Like a ghostly, sweet complaint ;

Something whispered me, and said :
“ All those years, so still and dead,
With a blessing shall come back
Down their winding dizzy track —

“ Like a friend, shall some time say :
‘ I am with you, though away,
And the love you thought so slight
And so poor a thing, shall light

“ ‘ All your life unto the end.’ ”
Thus my long-forgotten friend,
Or his soul, spoke unto me
In these words of prophecy.

TRANSFORMATION.

CLOUDS hung above the dusty street ;
The sunless air was faint with heat ;
The heavy odors were not sweet.

And heavy, heavy hung the day,
And life drooped dull with dull decay,
Beneath the clouds of sodden gray.

There was no beauty anywhere.
One could not pierce the dusty air.
The world seemed dim with drudging care :

Its wheels of traffic, greed, and gain,
Relentless over joy or pain,
Crushed close and fast, a strident strain

Of blatant noise, that filled the air,
The sunless, dreary, dusty air,
Till noise, and noise seemed everywhere ;

And only noise, with nothing sweet
Through all the sunless heavy heat,
From end to end of all the street.

“ Oh, dismal day, when will you go ?
Oh, dreary day ! ” she cried ; when lo,
The dreary day was all aglow !

Though clouds still hung in sunless air,
There was new beauty everywhere,
And slipped the world its cloak of care.

And wheels of traffic, greed, and gain
Rolled as before with strident strain,
Relentless over joy or pain.

But all at once, to music set,
She heard far off the clang and fret,
Or heard with ears that soon forget.

What was it, was it changed the day
From drooping life and dull decay?
What light across the dusty way

Shone suddenly so fair and free,
Made all the dismal shadows flee?
Oh, never yet on land or sea,

From any sky of any clime,
Rose that fair light, which old as Time,
Yet fresh as Nature in its prime,

Transfigures by its tender grace,
All in a moment's flying space,
Some sudden smile upon the face

We know and know not, till the day,
Transfigured, too, from dull decay,
Springs suddenly to blooming May.

APRIL WEATHER.

OH, this April weather —
Breath of balm and snow,
June and March together
In an hour or so !

Something altogether
Charming in it, too ;
Not the worst of weather
When the sun shines through ;

Not the worst of weather,
Though a moment more,

Finds one's patience, rather
Like to run ashore.

Take it altogether,
Would I change it, though,
Miss this April weather,
Breath of balm and snow?

Taken altogether,
It is dear to me,
This queer April weather,
For I seem to see,

Taken altogether,
It's the counterpart,
This queer April weather,
Of — yourself, Sweetheart.

And taken altogether,

Would I change you, though,

Miss your April weather?

Ah, no ! no !

AT IVRY.

AT Ivry, on that day,
On that day
When the king kept at bay,
By the magic of his sword
Never lowered,
All the rabble rebel horde, —
In the thickest of the fight,
Out of sight
All at once dropped the white
Flying plume that he wore.
Such a roar
Then arose, as they bore

Down the battle sodden plain,
Mid the slain,
Where the arrows fell like rain,
But suddenly just here,
Loud and clear,
At the very height of fear,
Cheer on cheer
Rose and rose, till the cry,
High and high,
Seemed to rend the very sky.
Then out streaming debonair
To the air
Flew the white plume of Navarre.
When the tide of battle turned,
And they learned
Whose valiant sword had spurned

The enemy's sharp blade

Ere it laid

In death's melancholy shade

The knight of Navarre,—

All the air

Once again resounded there

With their cheers' hearty ring.

But the king,

Through his tears, said faltering,—

“He gave his life for mine,

Poured the wine

Of that gallant blood, in fine,

At my feet, to repay,—

To repay,

As he swore, the debt of yesterday!”

ONLY A WEEK AGO.

ONLY a week ago the warmth and glow

Of sweetest summer time ;

Only a week ago the bud and blow

Of some fair tropic clime.

Only a week ago, and now the glow

Of fervid heat has turned

To wintry snow, and sharp winds blow

Where tropic splendors burned.

Only a week ago — ah, very low

My cherished buds are lying ;

So low, so low, I do not know
If they are dead or dying.

So low, so low, drenched all with mire and
snow,

Their beauty smirched with earth;
So low, so low — only God's breath can blow
Them back to fresher birth.

YESTERDAY.

WHAT if but yesterday
I laughed and said him nay,
When here's to-day, to-day
To change my mind and say
A sweeter word than nay.

What if but yesterday
I told him that my nay
Could never turn to yea,
Though he should pray and pray
Forever and a day.

What if but yesterday
He swore he would obey
My cruel will, nor stay
To further sue or pray,—
Then strode in wrath away.

What if but yesterday
Like this he strode away,
When here's to-day, to-day
For him to hear me say,—
“I love you, Love, to-day !”

THE MAID OF HONOR.

ACROSS the room where'er I turned,
Her mournful glances followed me
From day to day, with eyes that burned
In sad and splendid mystery ;

From day to day since first she came
A fugitive from that fair land
Of sunny France, when all its fame
Was shadowed by the mighty hand

Of the resistless German foe, —
A fugitive, yet sacred charge

From one who gave back blow for blow
Of German steel and charge for charge

Of German guns, until before
The fiery hail his gracious life
Went out for France, and with it bore,
Vain sacrifice of vainer strife,

His stainless name. The last of all
His noble race, did he divine
That from a stranger's alien wall
His fair ancestress' face would shine?

That glance for glance, she would return
My fascinated gaze, until
Behind the semblance seemed to burn
A spirit that might wake at will

Some moment into sudden speech ;

Some moment when the world at rest
In shrouding slumbers, she might reach
My waking ear — this silent guest,

Break from the bondage of her trance,
Slip softly from her painted screen
And speak to me of that fair France
When Marie Antoinette was Queen.

Day after day this fancy grew
Beneath the melancholy light
Of those dark eyes of Norman blue ;
Day after day, until a night

Of brooding storm, I woke and slept,
And woke again, to find the room

A blaze of light, wherein there stept

My Maid of Honor in her bloom

Of splendid youth, just as she stood

When Marie Antoinette was Queen, —

A living rose whose noble blood

Paid forfeit on the guillotine.

I held my breath, but not with fear —

My heart was beating with desire, —

When soft upon my listening ear

Her voice rose like a silver lyre :

“ He was the last of all our race,

The last and best, who loved his kind

And gave his lifetime to efface

The trail of sin we'd left behind.

“Favored of Heaven, we thought our class,
Set high above the common herd
Our ancient race — alas, alas,
When through our idle pleasures stirred

“The boding breeze of discontent,
And men cried out against the laws,
We did not know then all it meant;
We did not know that in the jaws

“Of blackest Hell we should be hurled
Just at our revel’s royal height ;
As through the streets our chariots whirled
We did not heed the threatening night.

“But when beside the Queen I stood
That dreadful day and heard those cries

Of rage for blood, our hated blood,
Ring from the throng we dared despise,

“I saw the centuries roll back
Red with the wrongs that we had done,
And all along the lurid track,
As in a vision, one by one,

“The tyrant kings who had forsworn
Their oaths of fealty, broken faith
With France, and Frenchmen yet unborn,
Each branded with their country's scathe,

‘Rose up before me till appalled,
I shrank with horror and despair;
Then through the din a low voice called
Upon my name, — I turned and there

“I saw the face of him, our knight,

Who made the glory of our name.

‘Be patient, brave,’ he cried, ‘the blight

Of centuries of sin and shame

“‘In this dread hour begins to lift

Its sullen shade ; when time shall bring

Another cycle through the drift

Of burdened years, prelate and king

“‘In this fair France shall have stept down

From off their thrones, have laid aside

Once and for all sceptre and crown,

While we who thought we vainly died

“‘Shall watch the bravest and the best

The last of lordly lines expire,

And know at length God gives his rest
To souls long tried by flame and fire,

“ ‘That with the debt of blood and race,
By blood and race at last repaid,
We expiate, by Heaven’s dear grace,
The sins by which we were betrayed.’ ”

Here suddenly, like music spent,
The sweet voice ceased, and all that bloom
Of youth and beauty that had lent
Such grace and glory to my room,

Faded and vanished from my gaze.

A moment more, and there, ah there,
Behind the portrait’s painted glaze
That face so radiantly fair

Looked down upon me as before.—

Was it a dream that she had stept
Just now across my chamber floor,
Was it a dream while I had slept?

KISS AND CURE.

SHE swung her gilded scissors to and fro,
And round and round her hand of rosy snow,
Or held them glittering like a lance at rest,
The time she spent in converse with her guest :
She swung them round and round and to and
fro,

Until they pierced the hand of rosy snow,
Until they dipped their cruel tips within
The warm red blood beneath the tender skin.
She swung them down at that with half a cry,
And half a laugh that ended in a sigh.
And with an answering laugh in gayest jest,
He bent above the little hand and prest

A pitying kiss of playful tenderness
Upon the wound that flawed that loveliness
Of rosy snowy flesh with tiny brand,
“Thus let me kiss and cure the little hand,”
He gayly lightly cried ; but as he prest
Warm lips to warm sweet flesh, the idle jest
Suddenly to ardent earnest thrilled and beat
And brought an eager wooer to her feet.
The tiny wound he'd gallantly essayed
To kiss and cure, had in that moment made
A wider wound within the healer's heart,
That must in turn be healed with cunning art.
And kneeling at her feet he urged his plea,—
“Be my physician, love, and heal for me
The greater wound this little wound has made,
Within my heart of hearts,” he fondly prayed.

A moment halting 'twixt a smile and frown
She left him in despair, then bending down,
Paid back the debt of healing with a sure
Swift touch — at which he cried: “to make the
cure

Entirely certain, love, I clearly see
There is no way now left for you and me
But to agree that while our lives endure
Each other's wounds like this, we'll kiss and
cure!”

BABY-MAY.

ONLY just the other day,
On the very first of May,
Nature had an opening
Of the treasures of the spring.

Apple-blossoms made a show
Like a shower of summer snow ;
Dandelions lifted up
Here and there a yellow cup.

Crocuses pushed through the mold
Little disks of burnished gold ;

And the violets, trimmed with dew,
Shivered in their cloaks of blue.

Ali the flowers had to tell
The adventures that befell,
In their journey back again
To the summer sun and rain.

At the last a gentle tone
Murmured softly, "I alone
Have had heavenly work to do;
For, when through the April dew

"I was hastening along,
Singing very low my song,
To my baby-buds of May,
Soft I heard an angel say:

“‘ Dear Arbutus, wait and take
Another baby in your wake, —
And deliver her with care
At a certain house and square,

“‘ I will whisper in your ear,
If you’ll bend a moment here;—
Then perhaps for thanks and pay
They will name her, — Baby May.’ ”

BUNKER HILL IN 1875.

BEAT, beat, went the drums, and the fifers
played sweet,

To the tramp, tramp, tramp, of the forty thousand feet

Of the twenty thousand soldiers, as they
marched all together,

North and south, south and north, in the sweet
summer weather.

Plumes playing in the air, and banners overhead,

Blowing out to the breeze, blue and white,
white and red,

And every now and then, oh, the cheer and
the shout

That from the waiting throng over all the
drums rang out !

And southern soldiers' eyes how they brightened
with surprise,

As the shouting and the cheering rose up to
the skies !

"But how very queer to cheer," says curious
little Joe,

"And to celebrate a day when the British beat,
you know !"

Yes, the British beat at Bunker Hill, 't is very
✓ true ; but why ?

Because the Yankee powder-horns, my little
Joe, went dry ;

While Yankee courage on that day filled all
the land with wonder,

And lifted up the hearts of men to break their
bonds asunder.

So 't is Yankee pluck, my little Joe, we cele-
brate to-day,

With beating drums, and bugle notes, and ban-
ners floating gay.

Yet something more than Yankee pluck inspired
our wild huzzas,

As looking down the glittering line we saw the
Strines and Stars

Wave gayly over North and South, as in the
summer weather

Like brothers on to Bunker Hill they took
their march together —

Like brothers, they who face to face so little
while ago

Met savagely on southern soil, as bitter foe to
foe.

Ah, child, if Bunker Hill before filled every
heart with wonder,

To-day, be sure, 't is doubly dear, when, all the
bonds asunder,

We clasp the hands that once were foes, and
in the summer weather

Bless God anew for Bunker Hill, that 's brought
us all together.

THE WREN AND THE BOBOLINK.

A FABLE.

“CHERINK ! cherink !”

Sang the Bobolink.

“What do you think,

To my surprise,

With my two eyes

I saw last night ?”

“Ho, ho, ho, ho !”

Sang the Wren below,

“How should I know

What can surprise
Such wonderful eyes
So keen and bright?"

"Cherink ! cherink !"

Snapped the Bobolink.

"I know what you think.

That my wonderful eyes
Are far too wise
For a youth like me !"

"Ho, ho, ho, ho !"

Laughed the Wren below.

"If you're sure you know,

Mr. Bobolink,
Just what I think,
Why can't you see?" —

“Cherink ! cherink ! ”

Quick as a wink

Mr. Bobolink

Interrupted here,

As if he 'd a fear

That cunning Miss Wren,

With her little “ Ho, ho ! ”

Saw too much, you know,

From her branch below,

Of his frisky ways,

Through the summer days,

In his bachelor's den.

So soft and low

Rang the little “ Ho, ho ! ”

In the branch below,

At Bobolink's huff ;
It was fun enough
For little Miss Wren

To catch Bobolink,
All in a wink,
Before he could think,
In a box like this, —
Ah, a sly little miss
Was this Miss Wren.

For soft and low
Her little "Ho, ho!"
Rang there below,
As if she could,
If she only would,
Tell, oh, *such* things

Of her neighbor's slips,
And frisky skips,
And sly little sips,
Not once in a way,
But every day,
At forbidden springs.

Precious few
Were the things she knew,
And all this ado
Was just to get
Bobolink in a pet
With her quizzical way,

Then fizz and flash,
For Robin was rash,
Out she knew would dash

As quick as a wink —

Ah, poor Bobolink,

All his secrets gay.

So sweet and low

Rings the little “Ho, ho!”

In the branch below,

At Bobolink’s huff;

It is fun enough

For little Miss Wren

To catch Bobolink,

All in a wink,

Before he can think,

In a box like this, —

Ah, a sly little miss

Is this Miss Wren,

Wherever you find

Her crafty kind :

For it is n't confined

To the feathered side,

But far and wide

In the world of men

This little " Ho, ho ! "

Rings soft and low,

And before you know

Just what you 're about,

You are all found out

By some little Miss Wren,

Who, with cunning wit,

Has turned and hit

Your temper a bit,

And like poor Bobolink,
When you've time to think,
You find to your cost,

A little too late,
As you contemplate
Your foolish state
From day to day,
That nothing can pay
For a temper lost.

BOSTON BOYS.

GRANDFATHER'S STORY.

WHAT! you want to hear a story all about
that old-time glory,

When your grandsires fought for freedom
against the British crown ;

When King George's red-coats mustered all
their forces, to be flustered

By our Yankee raw recruits, from each vil-
lage and each town ;

And the very boys protested, when they thought
their rights molested.

My father used to tell us how the British
General stared
With a curious, dazed expression when the
youngsters in procession
Filed before him in a column, not a whit
put out or scared.

Then the leader told his story, — told the
haughty, handsome Tory
How his troops there, on the mall there
(what you call “the Common,” dears),
All the winter through had vexed them, med-
dled with them, and perplexed them,
Flinging back to their remonstrance, only
laughter, threats, and sneers.

“What!” the General cried in wonder, — and
his tones were tones of thunder, —

“Are these the rebel lessons that your fathers taught you, pray?

Did they send such lads as you here, to make
such bold ado here,

And flout King George’s officers upon the
King’s highway?”

Up the little leader started, while heat lightning flashed and darted

From his blue eyes, as he answered, stout
of voice, with all his might:

“No one taught us, let me say, sir, — no one
sent us here to-day, sir;

But we ’re Yankees, Yankees, Yankees, and
we know that we are right!

“And your soldiers at the first, sir, on the
mall there, did their worst, sir ;

Pulled our snow hills down we'd built there,
broke the ice upon our pond.

‘Help it, help it if you can, then !’ back they
answered every man then,

When we asked them, sir, to quit it ; and
we said, ‘This goes beyond

“‘Soldiers’ rights or soldiers’ orders, for we’ve
kept within our borders

To the south’ard of the mall there, where
we’ve always had our play !’” —

“Where you always shall hereafter, undisturbed
by threats or laughter

From my officers or soldiers. Go, my brave
boys, from this day

“Troops of mine shall never harm you, never
trouble or alarm you,”

Suddenly the British Gen’ral, moved with
admiration, cried.

In a minute caps were swinging, five and
twenty voices ringing

In a shout and cheer that summoned every
neighbor far and wide.

And these neighbors told the story how the
haughty, handsome Tory,

Bowing, smiling, hat in hand there, faced
the little rebel band ;

How he said, just then and after, half in ear-
nest, half in laughter :

“So it seems the very children strike for
freedom in this land !”

So I tell you now the story all about that old-
time glory,

As my father's father told it long and long
ago to me ;

How they met and had it out there, what he
called their bloodless bout there ;

How he felt —— “What ! was he there,
then ?” Why, the *leader*, that was he !

A LITTLE GIRL'S WONDER.

WHAT do the birds say, I wonder, I wonder,
With their chitter and chatter? It is n't all
play.

Do they scold, do they fret at some boggle or
blunder,

As we fret, as we scold, day after day?

Do their hearts ever ache, I wonder, I wonder,
At anything else than the danger that comes
When some enemy threatens them over or
under

The great, leafy boughs of their great, leafy
homes?

Do they vow to be friends, I wonder, I wonder,
With promises fair and promises sweet,
Then, quick as a wink, at a word fall asunder,
As human friends do, in a moment of heat?

But day after day I may wonder and wonder,
And ask them no end of such questions as
these, —

With chitter, and chatter, now over, now under,
The big, leafy boughs of the big, leafy trees,

They dart and they skim, with their bills full
of plunder,

But never a word of an answer they give,
And never a word shall I get, though I wonder
From morning till night, as long as I live.

